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FROM THE
FRANCIS PARKMAN
MEMORIAL FUND

FOR

CANADIAN HISTORY

ESTABLISHED IN 1908





A MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. WILLIAM BLACK,

Wesleyan Minister.

HALIFAX, N. S.

INCLUDING AN ACCOUNT OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF

METHODISM IN NOVA SCOTIA,

CHARACTERISTIC NOTICES OF SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS; WITH COPIOUS
EXTRACTS FROM THE UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE
OF THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, REV. DR. COKE,
REV. FREEBORN GARRETSON, ETC.

BY MATTHEW RICHEY, A. M.

Principal of Upper Canada Academy.

REMEMBER them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.—ST. PAUL.

HALIFAX,

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CUNNABELL.

MDCCLXXXIX.

C 8085.159



Francis Parkman fund

TO
MARTIN G. BLACK AND WILLIAM A. BLACK, ESQUIRES,
THIS MEMOIR OF THEIR REVERED FATHER
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
WITH SENTIMENTS OF PROFOUND VENERATION
FOR HIS MEMORY,
AND THE MOST DEVOUT AND ARDENT WISHES THAT,
FOLLOWING HIM AS HE FOLLOWED CHRIST,
THEY MAY EVENTUALLY REIGN WITH HIM
IN LIFE ETERNAL.

FEB -4 1919



PREFACE.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS have now elapsed since the first Methodist Society was formed. That auspicious event dated the commencement of a new and glorious era in the history of Christianity. The moral revolution which Methodism, under the blessing of Almighty God, has already produced, has not been surpassed in magnitude and rapidity since the days of the Apostles. Its "line has gone out through all the earth, and its words to the ends of the world;" and while we behold it, all-animate still with the ardour and energy of its first love, "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race," is it too much to expect, that the day is coming when it will be universally recognized as the selectest agency of a redeeming Providence,

in ushering in the glories of millennial renovation and joy?

Religious apathy and ecclesiastical intolerance, on the one hand, and the predominating influence of doctrinal prejudice, on the other, have ever, not merely denied historical justice to the immortal Wesley, his coadjutors and immediate successors, but in many instances treated them with contempt and calumny. Those stars, however, in the Saviour's right hand, are now fast dissipating the clouds that so long dimmed their lustre, and are becoming broader and more refulgent to the view, in proportion as we recede from them. How animating the spectacle we witness at the present moment! Thousands, and tens of thousands, instinct with a hallowed emulation to testify their gratitude to God, for the inestimable blessings of Methodism, are coming forward, and with a liberality unexampled in the annals of the Church, decreeing the MONUMENTAL CELEBRATION of its CENTENARY on a scale commensurate with the greatness of the occasion. Already does the Trea-

sury of the Lord overflow with princely donations consecrated to this noble object : already does every genuine follower of Wesley, in anticipation, participate in a triumph immeasurably purer and more exalted than that of the vaunting poet.

* Exegi monumentum cere perennius,
Regalique situ pyramidum altius ;
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens
Possit diruere, aut innumerabilis
Annorum series, et fuga temporum.—HOR.

At such a period, the rise and progress of Methodism must become an object of interesting contemplation to all classes of Christians, save those whose zeal for the salvation of souls glows only on the altar of a party. "Nothing,"—observes the amiable and eloquent Owen—"Nothing is more natural than a desire to investigate the rise, and ascertain the progress of whatever has acquired sufficient importance to excite our astonishment,

* I have erected a monument more lasting than brass, and loftier than the imperial elevation of pyramids ; which neither the wasting rain, the impotent north wind, nor an innumerable succession of years, and the flight of seasons, shall be able to demolish.

or command our admiration. We feel a sort of instinctive curiosity to know the source whence the instrument of our gratification has been derived ; and expect to find our pleasure increase in proportion as we discover by what means it has been brought, from its simplest elements and its smallest dimensions, to its actual state of symmetry and grandeur."

A synoptical digest of whatever materials are necessary to the formation of a correct estimate of Methodism, in its *general* character and progressive operations, may be confidently anticipated from the forthcoming volume on the subject by the PRESIDENT of the British Conference, THE REVEREND THOMAS JACKSON,—a *desideratum* in the literature of Methodism which his previous productions evince him to be so admirably qualified to supply.

On the writer of the following Memoir an humbler task has devolved—that of tracing one of the tributary streams of this majestic river from its source, in connection with the history of him who

scooped its channel, and contributed so much to its purity and depth and expansion. He gives utterance to no feeling of voluntary humility in saying that, highly as he estimates the honour of being the biographer of the REVEREND WILLIAM BLACK, it has often been matter of unfeigned regret to him, while contemplating his character, that the delineation of it had not engaged the talents of some one more competent, from matured experience and a larger measure of heavenly wisdom, to do it justice. Were the first sheet of this volume now passing through the press instead of the last, he flatters himself he could in some respects materially improve it; but he must rest satisfied, for the present at least, with the sad consolation that "care will not always be successful; and recollection or information sometimes comes too late for use." Should a second edition of the work be called for, he will most gratefully receive and attentively regard any *friendly* suggestions with which he may be favoured, with a view to render it more acceptable and useful: and, in such an event, should

any light happen to issue from an *opposite* quarter, he trusts he possesses sufficient humility and wisdom not to disregard the prudential maxim, *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*. "It is wise to derive knowledge even from an enemy."

He now commends this Memoir, with all its imperfections, to the blessing of Heaven, praying that he who has compiled, and all who may peruse it, may be "followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

M. RICHEY.

*Upper Canada Academy,
May, 1839.*

MEMOIRS, &c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—MR. BLACK'S BIRTH—REMARKABLE PRESERVATION FROM PREMATURE DEATH—HIS FIRST SERIOUS IMPRESSIONS—HIS MOTHER'S SOLICITUDE AND EFFORTS FOR HIS SPIRITUAL WELFARE—THE FAMILY EMIGRATE TO NOVA SCOTIA—HIS NEW ASSOCIATIONS EXERCISE AN UNHAPPY INFLUENCE OVER HIM—SEEKS REST IN VAIN AMUSEMENTS, BUT FINDS NONE.

MINISTERIAL biography, when its subject, having taken upon him the sacred office, in obedience to a heavenly call, and with a clear perception of the momentous trust and responsibility it involves, dedicates himself with corresponding zeal and fidelity to the discharge of its functions, cannot fail to be eminently instructive and useful. To the general delineations of religious character,—invariably the same in its essential elements, whether found in a condition of tranquil seclusion, or amidst the excitements of public life,—it adds the interest of a new order of incidents; whilst the exercises of personal religion are often very materially modified by the trials and circumstances of office.

With the annals of a devoted minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are also interwoven numerous il

illustrations of God's dealings with his Church ; all of which, however varied their aspects or inscrutable their reasons, are seen to terminate in the same radiant point,—the glory of redeeming grace in the salvation of his people. And when the existing state of the cause of God is such, as to give unusual prominence to the operations of his grace in the conversion of souls, general attention is arrested,—a spirit of serious enquiry pervades families and neighbourhoods, penitents weep in secret places,—the sons of God exult,—the demon of persecution is roused, and often issues from lurking places where he was least of all suspected to exist, sceptics, like raging waves of the sea, foam out their own shame, or, mute with astonishment, start at the view of the unshrouded arm of Jehovah, while his Gospel goes forth, as at the first, attended with divine demonstrations of its celestial origin and virtue.

At no period in the history of the Christian Church, if we except the obscure and superstitious ages that preceded the glorious day of the Reformation, have the interests of vital godliness been at a lower ebb in England than when the Wesleys, Whitfield, and their coadjutors, like faithful watchmen on the walls of Zion, began to sound the note of alarm in the ears of a guilty and slumbering nation. Imbued with the spirit of the first heralds of the Lamb, untrammelled by the formalities of prescriptive usage, those holy men travelled beyond the precincts of particular churches ; they went out into the highways and hedges ; and inspiring the trumpet of the everlasting Gospel with no uncertain sound, they soon caused its undying echoes to be heard throughout the length and breadth of the land. A national revival of religion was the blessed

result. Nor were the hallowed impulses hemmed by the waves of the Atlantic. Propagated to the American Continent, they soon produced there the most gracious and magnificent effects, and continue to operate in the extensive territory of the new world with expansive energy and success. To Him be the glory of the achievement whose alone is the power! and embalmed be the memory, and emulated the bright example, of those whom in his sovereign wisdom, He selected as workers together with Him. Many, from whose intellectual and religious character better things might reasonably be expected, are slow to believe, and still more reluctant, it would seem, to acknowledge, that the stupendous moral revolution which has thus in a few short years been effected, and of whose stability and diffusive influence we possess the surest pledge in that spirit of evangelical enterprise, which now, more than at any former period since the days of the Apostles, characterises the Church of the Redeemer, is to be traced, under Divine Providence, to "a few young men whom God raised up in the University of Oxford to testify those grand truths which were then little attended to;—That without holiness no man shall see the Lord;—that this holiness is the work of God, who worketh in us both to will and to do; that he does it of his own good pleasure, merely for the merits of Christ;—that this holiness is the mind that was in Christ, enabling us to walk as he also walked; that no man can be thus sanctified till he be justified;—and that we are justified by faith alone."* Such, however, is the fact. And where historical justice is awarded to those self denying men, they will shine

* Wesley's Sermon "On the General Spread of the Gospel."

with distinguished lustre among the most energetic reformers of a decayed and torpid Christianity, and the most illustrious benefactors of mankind.

The mass of ignorance and vice which they assailed was sufficient to test and dismay the most heroic spirits. And had they stood alone, the combat would indeed have been unequal; their occasional triumphs could not have been followed up or long sustained. But the work was the Lord's, with whom there are never wanting the requisite resources for accomplishing his designs. A species of agency unthought of by those who first entered the field, and even opposed to their educational views and prejudices, came to their help—extraordinary messengers—who, though for the most part destitute of the imposing preliminaries of a Collegiate preparation for the ministry, wielded with divine effect those weapons which are mighty, through God, to the destruction of the fortresses of sin and Satan.

Among those, though at the distance of nearly half a century after Wesley commenced his career, the subject of these memoirs was called to occupy an important sphere of usefulness. His labours being confined to the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick till after the death of the venerable founder of Methodism, he never enjoyed the coveted pleasure of seeing him. He was, however, for a series of years, honoured with his paternal affection, counsel, and confidence,—as will appear in the course of the narrative, which we shall no longer withhold from the reader.

THE REVEREND WILLIAM BLACK was born of respectable parents, at Huddersfield, a large and flourishing town in West Yorkshire, in the year 1760.

When quite young, he spent several years under the roof of his maternal uncle, Mr. Thomas Stocks, at Otley, where he was placed at school. On a certain occasion, during his residence there, he had a remarkable escape from a premature grave. Conceiving, as we do, the manifestation of the scripture doctrine of a personal providence to be one of the most appropriate and important objects of biography, the circumstances of the deliverance alluded to so strikingly elucidate it, that they are entitled to a permanent record :—Mr. Stocks, accustomed it appears to spend many of his leisure hours in angling, brought home one day a live trout, and for the amusement of his juvenile nephew threw it into a trough of water that stood in the yard. William, after witnessing for some time, with no small degree of satisfaction, the gambols of his finny captive, stooped down incautiously to take a drink at the mouth of the spout by which the water was conveyed, and fell headlong into the trough. The position in which he fell precluded the possibility of his using an effort to extricate himself from his condition of imminent peril. In a very short time he must inevitably have been drowned, had not a female domestic, happening to come to the door just in time to rescue him from the arms of death, seen his feet above water, and ran to his relief. His appearance when taken out of the water was ominous ; for some time he lay motionless and insensible, and serious apprehensions were entertained by his afflicted friends that the vital spark was extinct. To their inexpressible joy, however, their fears were soon dissipated. Let the sceptical and the incredulous recognise nothing in these circumstances but a fortuitous, though a happy coincidence ; by the devout Christian they will be re-

ceived, not as the result of chance, but as emanating from the vigilant providence of Him who "numbers the hairs of our head, and in whose hand our breath is." Young as the subject of our narrative then was, this impressive occurrence was not without some salutary influence upon his mind; and that it was indelibly engraven upon his memory and heart as a merciful and monitory dispensation of the Most High, is apparent from the fact that, in recording many years afterwards the most signal mercies by which his life had been crowned, he places it at the head of the catalogue.

It is not always easy to trace back the serious impressions of a mind, trained under a religious influence, to their incipient operation. On Mr. Black's own authority, however, we can state, that he was not more than six years old when his mind was first deeply agitated with a view of his state as a sinner, and the awful anticipations of eternity. His feelings under these "compunctious visitings," will be best portrayed in his own ingenuous and inartificial language:—"When I was very young, even as early as five years old, I had some serious impressions; God's Spirit began to operate upon my mind. When I was six, I often wished I was a toad or a serpent, or any thing but what I was. For I thought, as a toad has no soul, it cannot be miserable; but I am in danger of being lost and tormented by the wrath of God for ever. Oh that I had never been born! I found an enmity in my heart against God, in his holiness and justice. It rose, young as I then was, against his sovereignty and dominion. It galled me to think that I must either repent or perish; so that many times before I was ten years of age, had it been in my power, I would have

overturned God's government and dethroned the gracious Author of my being ! It affects me while I relate it." To this disclosure of the workings of his native depravity at so early a period, he appends an enumeration of the vices to which he was then particularly addicted, and with repentant self abasement exclaims,—“ Lord ! to this day I desire to be humbled at every remembrance of those iniquities of my youth.” Impatient of the salutary restraints of school-discipline, William, when about thirteen years old, left his uncle's abruptly and without giving any previous intimation of his intention, and returned to his father's house. His father, having for some time entertained the design of emigrating to America, deemed it prudent to visit the intended land of his adoption himself, before he should finally determine on a step so deeply involving the future fortunes of his family. Accordingly, in the spring of 1774, he came to Nova Scotia, purchased an estate at Amherst in the county of Cumberland, and returning to England in the autumn, moved to America with his family the ensuing spring. Although he expressed his decided disapprobation of William's conduct in leaving his uncle, and returning home without permission, yet, as he was just then about to proceed to America, he allowed him to remain with his mother.

William's spiritual interests were not neglected by his pious and excellent mother during Mr. Black's visit to America. With all the tenderness and assiduity of a Christian mother's love, she warned and instructed him ; and plied him with the most powerful and touching motives to give his heart to God, watering the good seed with many prayers and tears. To her truly exemplary solicitude for his salvation he bears

grateful testimony :—“ While my father was in America, my dear mother paid particular attention to the concerns of my soul. Frequently did she take me aside into her closet to talk and pray with me. Often did she relate the dealings of God with herself ;—how, when she was about sixteen years old, she was convinced of sin, and experienced the love of God shed abroad in her heart by the Holy Ghost ; that she knew her sins forgiven, and that her Redeemer lived. Frequently and affectionately did she press the necessity of conversion and the new birth upon my conscience. Nor were her godly admonitions altogether in vain. They deeply affected me. Many times they sent me to my closet to my knees, where with tears I besought the Lord for mercy.”

It were gratifying to be able to relate that these re-
lentings of heart, and applications for mercy, issued
in true conversion ; that blossoms of promise so fair,
were soon followed by the fruits of righteousness. But
we are denied that satisfaction. Even the pathos of
maternal eloquence, though its subjects be replete with
overwhelming interest—the love of the Saviour, and
the joys and woes of a never ending existence,—has
not power to win the alienated affections to God. As-
sailed by this species of benignant aggression, the
heart may, indeed, throw off its shield of wonted ob-
duracy,—it may tremble with alarm, and dissolve in
natural sensibility, and agonize with apparent contri-
tion ; but such symptoms of godly sorrow are by no
means unequivocal ; they are hopeful presages, but
no certain indications of that “ repentance unto sal-
vation which needeth not to be repented of.” We
are in no danger, we conceive, by this suggestion, of
discouraging the efforts of religious parents to pro-

mote the immortal interests of their children. They have not to learn that although the renovation of the heart in righteousness is the achievement, not of human suasion, but of divine agency, that agency is put forth in connection with the use of means, of which the necessity of a superior power to render them efficient can neither justify nor extenuate the neglect. It will therefore be their wisdom, in a department of relative responsibility, where the requisitions of duty blend with the promptings of natural affection, to imitate the unceasing assiduity of the provident husbandman, who "in the morning sows his seed, and in the evening withholds not his hand; for he knows not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall be alike good."

One of the most usual and seductive temptations in the way of young people's embracing religion, when awakened to a perception of its necessity, arises from a wrong estimate of its genius and tendency in relation to their immediate happiness. Unreserved consecration to the service of God, however conducive, in their estimation, to *future* felicity, involves, they imagine, to a great extent, the renunciation of *present* enjoyment. The idea is as unjust as it is pernicious. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ is not the stern prohibiter of pleasure, but, according to his own beautiful description of it, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria,—the salient well-spring of all that is pure and lofty in true blessedness, "springing up unto eternal life." Her ways are indeed "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Had this view of the influence of real religion been entertained by the subject of these memoirs, when under the affecting teachings of his mother, his mind was

so deeply impressed, the result would probably have been more auspicious. "But alas!" he laments, "that subtle adversary, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour, soon suggested,—'It is too soon for you to be religious yet. It will destroy all your happiness, cut off all your pleasures, and make you a laughing stock to every boy in the school.' With this and such like temptations he prevailed. I quenched the spirit of God and drove away my concern in a great measure, so that I could sin on as before."

In the month of April, 1775, the whole family sailed from Hull, on board the *Jenny*, Captain Foster; and after a propitious passage, arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia. When they were within three miles of Halifax the vessel struck upon some rocks, not however with such violence as to injure her; and as the accident occurred at low water, she was carried off by the returning tide. After remaining about a fortnight in Halifax, they sailed for Cumberland, where they arrived in June. Mr. Black pays a tribute, short yet full, and extremely pleasing, to the memory of Captain Foster, which shall, in accordance with the intention of the writer, be coeval with this page:—"Captain Foster was a pattern to mariners, especially to masters of vessels. I never heard him speak a rash word. Nor did I, to my knowledge, hear an oath, from the time we left England until we arrived in Halifax harbour, either by mariner or passenger, although I suppose there were about ninety souls on board. The Captain used to call all that could and would, to come into the cabin, morning and evening, and pray with them himself. He maintained the strictest order on board the vessel. What a pity so few masters of vessels imitate him!" The

day is approaching when the most splendid and lasting work of the statuary will be deemed an infinitely less estimable memorial than a deserved tribute like the preceding.

On coming to America Mr. Black naturally formed new associations ; and they unfortunately happened to be of a class ill adapted to cherish or renew his serious impressions. He soon drank into their spirit, and became one of the most gay and thoughtless of the circle. "On my arrival here," he writes, "I grew in wickedness, as I grew in years, turning the precious mercy of God into lasciviousness." To such a pitch of insensibility did he, by wilfully suppressing his convictions, rapidly arrive, that danger the most appalling failed to arrest or alarm him, in his reckless career. "If I remember correctly," he continues, "in the fall of 1776, a few people came from Machias, raised all who were disaffected to, and disarmed all who were friends of the Government, in the county of Cumberland. They forbade us to stir off our farms, burnt the town, and threatened many with imprisonment and death. As there were but a handful of men in the garrison, and they knew not the weakness of the rebels, they did not attempt to come out to relieve the country, till reinforced by the arrival of a frigate from Halifax. In the night, they would frequently fire upon the garrison, and the garrison upon them. Now, here was a time that called for repentance and preparation for death. But my ears were shut to all the warnings of Providence. It was our usual custom at this time to sit up whole nights at the ridiculous practice of shuffling backwards and forwards a few spotted pieces of paste-board.—When we heard the cannons roar or the discharge of the

musketry, we have frequently gone awhile from our cards to watch the flashing of the guns, during the hottest of the fire, and, as soon as that was over, returned again. We could easily see the garrison from my father's house. Thus was our precious time spent in the vainest of vanity. I do not see how any man that believes the Bible can reconcile himself to card-playing. It is childish, irrational, and far beneath the dignity of an immortal. About this time we began to frolic and dance, for whole nights together; sometimes four or five nights in the week. Yet I did not find happiness in it. I have sometimes put my fingers in my ears to stop the sound of the music, and then said within myself, 'What fools are we! to leap up and down like so many wild Indians round a fire.' Still I loved it." Palpably incompatible as the course he was now pursuing was with the service of the Lord, yet, blinded by the god of this world, he vainly attempted to conciliate them. He had not made up his mind to perish forever; and he knew the prayerless shall not enter heaven. Hence he says, "I frequently, at this time, would pray in a formal manner. I durst not wholly neglect it; and yet my conduct was such, and the spirit of dancing was so contrary to the spirit of prayer, that I hardly durst use it." In this unhappy state of mental conflict he continued for two or three years; his convictions, on the one hand, poisoning all his carnal pleasures, and his enslavement to those pleasures, increased by the seductive influence of association, and the force of habit, preventing him, on the other, from acting in accordance with his convictions. This is no peculiar case. Many a breast, it is believed, which appears from the smiles that play upon the countenance, to be the seat of serenity and

sunshine, would, were the veil but put aside, exhibit the *original* of the picture, which Mr. Black has drawn above, of the interior of his own heart. Those who have perused Dr. Doddridge's interesting narrative of remarkable passages in the life of Colonel Gardiner, cannot fail to be here reminded of the striking corroboration of the truth of these sentiments afforded by the experience of that distinguished officer in the midst of his revelry and dissipation. The irrepressible buoyancy of his spirit had earned for him the appellation of "The happy rake," and often made him an object of envy to those who paid him the dreadful compliment. "Yet," says the Dr., "still the checks of conscience, and some remaining principles of so good an education, would break in upon his most licentious hours; and I particularly remember he told me, that when some of his dissolute companions were once congratulating him on his most distinguished felicity, a dog happening at that time to come into the room, he could not forbear groaning inwardly, and saying to himself, 'Oh that I were that dog!'" He who would find rest for his soul must despair of realizing it in the gay illusions of sense; retiring from the enchanted circle of worldly pleasure, he must seek it where alone it ever has or ever can be found—in the love of God, and its inseparable concomitant—a hope of glory that maketh not ashamed.

"Thou art the source and centre of all minds,
Their only point of rest, Eternal Word;
From thee departing, they are lost, and rove
At random, without honour, hope, or peace.

From thee is all that soothes the life of man;
His high endeavour and his glad success;
His strength to suffer, and his will to serve.
But O ! thou bounteous giver of all good !
Thou art of all thy gifts thyself the crown ;
Give what thou canst, without thee we are poor,
And with thee rich, take what thou wilt away."

COWPER.

CHAPTER II.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL CLEARLY DEMONSTRABLE—ITS SPIRITUAL EFFICIENCY—EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION ESSENTIAL TO A MINISTER OF CHRIST—ACCOUNT OF MR. BLACK'S CONVERSION IN A LETTER TO MR. WESLEY—DETAIL OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS CONVERSION—HIS VIVID DELINEATION OF HIS PEACE AND JOY THROUGH BELIEVING—HE IS ASSAILED BY STRONG TEMPTATIONS—OBTAINS THE VICTORY OVER THEM, AND ENJOYS GREAT PEACE—IS MADE A BLESSING TO HIS FAMILY.

THE Apostle Paul, in addressing the Galatians, thus emphatically asserts the divine origin of the system he had with singular success preached among them:—“ I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me, is not after man ; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” On this basis rest all its claims to reception and obedience. And those claims are, indeed, divinely sustained. The documentary proof of the divinity of the Christian system is luminous, varied, and abundant. Before the foundations on which the righteous build their elevated hopes are destroyed, the volume of inspired prediction, extant for ages, and for ages interpreted and fulfilled by the events of history, must sink into oblivion,—all confidence must be withdrawn from human and historical testimony the most unexceptionable,—the depositions

of the senses, though given in circumstances highly favourable to their calm and convincing exercise, must be set aside,—and the progressive character and intimate agreement, the peerless grandeur and majestic simplicity of the series of revelations that compose the sacred records, must be accounted for without the supposition of their having emanated from the Supreme Intelligence. Till then let the infidel suspend his propensity to indulge in invidious and self-complacent comparisons ; let him not gratuitously felicitate himself on his intellectual magnanimity, and impugn the disciple of the New Testament, as weak and credulous.

The celestial origin of the Gospel is susceptible of another species of demonstration, as satisfactory to the *heart* imbued with its influence, as that, which has been just hinted at, is to the *understanding*. The Gospel is essentially a remedial scheme. Its grand and peculiar characteristic is, that it unfolds the ruin of man by himself, and his recovery by the mercy and grace of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Along with an exposure of the disease in all its malignancy, which has laid waste our moral constitution, it exhibits a divine specific, of unfailing virtue, to invigorate with spiritual health all who receive it. From such a system, the idea of EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION, however stigmatised as ENTHUSIASM by those who “know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God,” is obviously inseparable. “The truth as it is in Jesus” cannot be adequately understood without being felt. “The natural man,” however gifted by nature, or cultivated by education, “receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ; they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” If, without this divine illumination and experience, a man can

have no proper perception of the things of God, it would seem altogether superfluous to prove that he cannot be qualified to teach them. Besides, it is preposterous to conceive, that He who ever adapts his instruments to the work in which they are employed, should select unconverted and unholy men to carry forward the moral renovation of the world. The objects of the Christian Ministry are thus represented by the Divine Author of the institution, in his address to Paul: "To turn" men "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in me." To qualify Paul for this sublime and holy office, it was not enough that the Son of God was revealed *to* him—he was also revealed *in* him. (Galat. i: 16). And it is worthy of special consideration that he received this interior revelation of Christ that he might be qualified to *preach* him. The objects of that ministry are still the same; and the same spiritual preparation, on the part of those called to sustain it, is still equally necessary to their attainment. Without this, intellect of the highest order, though disciplined with care, and enriched with various and recondite knowledge, an imagination fervid yet chaste, a memory the most tenacious, and an elocution equally graceful and energetic, avail but little in the sacred desk. They may excite admiration, but they will not *win souls*. Cicero declares it as his settled persuasion, that no one can hope to attain perfection as an orator "unless he shall have acquired the knowledge of all the sciences."^a Still more indispen-

^a Ac mea quidem sententia, nemo poterit esse omni laude cum-
latus orator, nisi erit omnium rerum magnarum atque artium-
scientiam consecutus.—De Orat. Lib. I,

sable is an experimental acquaintance with the science of salvation to him who would preach "Christ crucified,"

"In thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

In the biography of such a minister, the record of his conversion to God will always occupy a prominent place. This great and blessed change was experienced by Mr. Black when about nineteen years of age. He sometime afterwards wrote an account of it to Mr. Wesley, who thus introduces it in his published Journal:—April 15, 1782. "I had now leisure to transcribe a letter, wrote last May, from Amherst, in Nova Scotia, by a young man whose father, some years since, went thither with his whole family" :—

"In the year 1779, I saw, if I would go to heaven, I must lead a new life. But I did not know I wanted an inward change, or see the deplorable state I was in by nature, till I was at a prayer meeting held at Mr. Oxley's. While they were praying, my heart began to throb within me, my eyes gushed out with tears, and I cried aloud for mercy; as did most that were in the room, about fourteen in number. One, indeed, could not hold from laughing, when we began to cry out; but it was not long before he cried as loud as any. In a few moments it pleased God to fill Mrs. Oxley with joy unspeakable. After this, we went almost every night to Mr. Oxley's to sing and pray. Going thence one night, and seeing the Northern Lights, I thought, 'What, if the Day of Judgment be coming?' I threw myself down on the ground, and cried to the Lord for mercy. On Sunday, Mr. Wells, an old Methodist, came to Amherst, and gave us an exhortation, in which he said, 'Sin and repent, sin and repent, till you repent

in the bottomless pit.' The words went like a dagger to my heart; and I continued mourning after God for five weeks and four days, till our monthly meeting. I was then strongly tempted to put an end to my life; but God enabled me to resist the temptation. Two days after, an old Methodist, after praying with me, said, 'I think you will get the blessing before morning.' About two hours after, while we were singing a hymn, it pleased God to reveal his Son in my heart. Since that time I have had many blessed days, and many happy nights.

"One Sunday night, after my brother Richard and I were gone to bed, I asked him, 'Can you believe?' He answered, 'No.' I exhorted him to wrestle hard with God, and got up to pray with him. But he was unbelieving still: so I went to sleep again. Yet, not being satisfied, after talking largely to him, I got up again, and began praying for him; being fully persuaded that God would set his soul at liberty. And so he did: he pardoned all his sins, and bade him 'go in peace.'

"It being now between twelve and one, I waked my brothers John and Thomas, and told them the glad tidings. They got up. We went to prayer; and when we rose from our knees, Thomas declared, 'God has blotted out all my sins.' I then went to my father and mother, (who were both seeking salvation,) and told them the joyful news. My father said, 'Willy, pray for us.' I did; and earnestly exhorted him to wrestle with God for himself. So he did; and it was not long before God set his soul also at liberty. The next morning it pleased Him to show my sister Sarah his parloring love. Blessed be his name for all his benefits!

“Not long after, Mr. Oxley’s son came to our house ; and lay with me, and complained of his hardness of heart. After I had talked with him a little while, the Lord laid his hand on him in a wonderful manner ; so that he rolled up and down, and roared as in the agonies of death. But between one and two in the morning, he likewise could rejoice in God his Saviour. These are a few of the wonderful works of God among us ; but he is also working upon the hearts of the inhabitants in general.”

“WILLIAM BLACK, JUNR.”

A more minute detail of the circumstances connected with a part of Mr. Black’s history so full of interest, cannot fail to be peculiarly acceptable to the reader. I therefore extract a more circumstantial statement from a short account of the Lord’s dealings with his soul, drawn up by himself, the autograph of which now lies before me.

“In the Spring of 1779, the Lord began in a more powerful manner, to operate upon my mind. The occasion of it was as follows :—A few of the old Methodists who emigrated from England, some years before, having had something of a revival in their souls, began to hold little meetings for prayer and exhortation. God blessed their word, some were awakened ; and it was presently rumoured abroad, that such and such were converted. This helped to set the people a-thinking and enquiring, whether these things were so.

“One day, my brother John had been over at Fort Lawrence. On his return he informed me that G. Swinburne told him that John Johnson and another man were converted, and knew their sins forgiven, and that he ought to seek the same blessing. ‘But’, said he ‘I do not believe it, for Johnson was playing

cards, at such a time.' I replied, 'Brother, it signifies little to us how the case is with them, whether they are converted or not, we must alter the course of our lives or we cannot see the kingdom of God.'—He said, 'I intend to do it.' 'But,' said I, 'let us determine and covenant to lead a new life.' We accordingly entered into a covenant that we would set out on a new course, leave off dancing, card-playing, &c. and attend the meetings for prayer; and shook hands as a seal of the same. But, although we had thus solemnly covenanted together, we durst not enter into conversation, about the state of our souls, for nearly a fortnight after; and yet, we longed to open our minds, and were together every day.

"About this time I went over to Mr. Oxley's. They were seeking the Lord, and exhorted me to do the same. Their conversation was made a blessing to me. I was full of good desires. On the Sabbath I went to meeting, and felt still greater desires; for several days after I felt my mind continually drawn to prayer and meditation. Religious concerns alone possessed my mind; nor had I the least inclination to return to my old companions or ways; so that I said, in my heart, 'I wish all the world knew how easy it is to be religious,—surely, they would all turn to God.' But alas! I knew very little what was in my heart, or of real religion.

"One night, we had a meeting at Mr. Oxley's. We had desired an old man to come and pray with us. His name was John Newton, from Pradhew, near Newcastle. He gave out a hymn; but before he had sung many verses, the tears began to gush from my eyes, and my heart to throb within me. I could not but cry out for mercy, as in a little time most of the company

did. One young man, at first, began to laugh at us. He thought, 'What ! you never committed murder, or did any thing so dreadful, that you need to make such fools of yourselves, and roar out like mad people.' But God soon turned his laughter into sorrow. An arrow of conviction fastened in his heart, and he roared out louder than any, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Ten or eleven continued thus crying for some time. In about an hour, God graciously set Mrs. Oxley at liberty. Her soul was brought out of dismal darkness into light truly marvellous. Oh ! how did her soul exult in the Redeemer, and magnify his blessed name. We continued our meeting for two or three hours, and then parted. I went home with my ~~three brothers and sister~~, weary and heavy laden. It seemed to me if an hundred people had been there, they must have been *all* awakened.

→ "From this time, for some months, we met almost every night, to sing and pray ; generally continuing from a little after sun-down, until midnight. Frequently, I with another remained till day-light. To weep—to fast—to pray—was now become as my meat and drink. I did not desire any thing else until I found Jesus. I thought, I talked, of Jesus ; nor could I bear to hear of any thing but what had a tendency to lead my soul to him. It filled me with amazement to see men endowed with reason, and capable of enjoying God's love, or of bearing his wrath, for ever, spending their precious moments in the most trifling and unprofitable conversation.

"Returning one night from meeting, it was impressed upon my mind,—'The curse of God hangs over prayerless families ; God is not worshipped in your family ; this is *your* sin.' Before this, my mind had

been distressed on this account, and I had requested my father to pray with us; but he always put it off saying, 'I will, when I get more strength.' I went home saying within myself, 'If neither my father, nor my elder brother, will pray with the family, I will.' Just as I opened the door, my brother, who had been exercised much as I was, broke out in prayer; from which time we had family prayer, morning and evening. That night I went to bed in sore distress." The powerful effect produced upon his mind soon after this by the pungent appeal of Mr. Wells, in his exhortation, to which he refers in his letter to Mr. Wesley, he thus more particularly describes:—"Lord," thought I, "I am the very man. I sin, and grieve; and then I sin again. Alas! what will such repentance avail. I must be holy or I cannot be happy. Now my sins were set in battle array before me. I saw myself wretched, miserable, helpless and undone. I went about from day to day, hanging down my head like a bulrush, the tears frequently streaming down my face in abundance; yet I met with no deliverance. However, I determined never to rest until I should know that *my* Redeemer lived;—I would not be comforted because he was not.

"Not long after this, I went to Mr. Scurr's, fully expecting he would say much to me about the state of my soul; and promised myself much benefit from so holy a man. But I was greatly disappointed. He said but little to me. How apt are we to look for too much from man, to lean upon an arm of flesh, instead of looking to the Lord. That night he gave an exhortation at his own house; but alas! I felt hard and stupid. If a tear could have saved my soul, I could not shed one. I thought, surely I am one of the vilest

wretches on earth. I know I am a child of wrath, and an heir of hell; and should I die here I am undone forever, and yet I cannot shed a tear. Alas! alas! I am worse than ever. In this deplorable state I laid me down, concluding I was farther and farther from God. I mourned because I could not mourn, and grieved because I could not grieve.

“The day following was our monthly meeting, at Mr. Foster’s of Fort Lawrence; and such a day, my eyes never beheld, before or since. Mr. Wells’ prayer was just suited to my case; every word came home with keen conviction, and sank deeper in my heart than ever. Formerly, I longed to feel my sins a greater burthen, and prayed that my distress might be increased; I seemed greedy of sorrow; and to shed tears, afforded some relief. But *now*, the scene was changed. My sins were a burthen intolerable to be borne. I was weary of life. I saw myself *justly* condemned, and said within myself, ‘I wish I was dead: if God pleases to save, it is infinite mercy; if he damns me—he it so—it is righteous and just; I cannot help myself.’ Every thing augmented my sorrows. A cock crowing, just at this time, brought strongly to my recollection Peter’s denial of his Master. I cried within myself ‘Oh! I am wretchedly denying the Lord Jesus a place in my heart. I like Peter, have denied the Lord.’

“After the meeting, John Newton came to me and said, ‘Surely, Willy, there must be something that thou art not willing to give up, or else God would have delivered thy soul ere now.’ I replied, ‘I am in Francis Spira’s condition.’ ‘No! No!’ said the good old man; ‘I believe it will not be long before the Lord deliver thy soul. Sorrow may endure for a night, but

joy shall come in the morning.' He endeavoured to encourage me much, and entreated me to give up all my soul to Jesus, assuring me, that I should find relief. My distress was great. I thought, if I were in hell I could not be much more miserable than I then was. 'A wounded spirit, who can bear?' Soon after, the extremity of my distress went off, and I remained for two days under a heavy sort of melancholy. All the time, I felt an awful sense of God, and of my lost condition without help from heaven. In the evening, I went to Mr. Oxley's. Mrs. Donkin was there. She knew my distress, and asked, 'Can you believe?' I answered in the negative. She said, 'You are reasoning with the enemy; come to me; I have got a sweet promise for you.' I went; she presented me with a passage in the Bible, which she thought suitable to my condition. I said, 'I have seen many such sweet promises in the Bible to day, but alas! they are not for me.'

"Mr. Frieze came to me; and after enquiring the state of my mind, and praying, took an affectionate leave of me, saying, 'I believe God will deliver you before morning.' I tarried still at Mr. Oxley's. We continued singing and praying about two hours, when it pleased the Lord to reveal his suitableness, ability, and willingness to save me; so that I could cast my soul upon him with,—'I am thine, and thou art mine,' while our friends were singing,

' My pardon I claim,
For a sinner I am—
A sinner believing in Jesus's name.'

"I could then claim my interest in his blood, and lay fast hold of him as the hope set before me—the Lord

my Righteousness. Instantly, my burden dropped off.—my guilt was washed away—my condemnation was removed—a sweet peace and gladness were diffused abroad in my soul—my mourning was turned into joy, and my countenance, like Hannah's, told my deliverance,—*it was no more heavy.* After returning public thanks, I went home praising God. All my song was,

‘ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.’

“ But though I look upon this as the time of my espousals to Jesus, I have many times since experienced far greater joy than then.

“ The next morning, my brother John came to inquire the state of my soul. I said, ‘ O ! blessed be the Lord, I am happy ; he hath graciously delivered me, and makes my heart to rejoice in his name,’ &c. He went and told my brother Richard, who, some time after, came to propose a similar question. In the meantime, not feeling an equal degree of joy, I began to question whether I had indeed found the Lord ? or whether the peace I now felt was right or not ! I said, ‘ I cannot tell you ; I do not feel as I did. My mind is at peace, but not so happy as it was.’ Soon after his departure, while I was reading, the Lord again smiled upon my soul, and cheered my heart, as with the new wine of his kingdom. My scruples were all removed, and I could cry, ‘ My Lord ! and my God !

“ Now, I concluded, my mountain is strong, and cannot be moved. But what are we, if God for a moment hide his face ?

“ The same evening we went to Mr. Oxley's, where seeing many in great distress, I said, ‘ Oh ! that you would all come to Christ : surely you may all believe if you will ; it is easy to believe.’ It was instantl

suggested to my mind, 'You are deceived; you are inflated with pride';—and that with such power, that all my comforts fled, and I was constrained to cry out in the presence of them all, 'Oh! what a wretch am I. I said a few minutes ago, *you may all believe if you will*; and now I cannot believe myself.' I went into the field, and throwing myself on the ground, cried to the Lord for help. He heard my prayer, he saw my distress, and filled my soul with love, and bade me go in peace. 'Lord! what a wavering, inconstant soul am I! Sometimes I feel thy love,—I behold thy fulness,—I see thee altogether lovely, and conclude that I shall never doubt thy love again. But no sooner does the storm come on—the winds blow—and the seas run high—than I begin to doubt; and the more I doubt, the more I sink, and should perish altogether, if thou didst not stretch out thine arm to me, as thou didst to sinking Peter.' However, these temptations from the enemy confirmed me the more, for proportional comforts always followed them; if my distress was great, my deliverance was greater. This, I find, has been the case to the present time. I now went on my way rejoicing.

'Jesus, all the day long,
 Was my joy and my song,
 O that all his salvation might see!
 He hath loved me, I cried,
 He hath suffered and died,
 To redeem such a rebel as me!
 On the wings of his love,
 I was carried above
 All sin, and temptation, and pain;
 I could not believe
 That I ever should grieve,—
 That I ever should suffer again.'

“Every thing conspired to make me happy. Whether I looked upon the heavens above, or the earth beneath, they sparkled with the Creator’s glory ; all creation seemed to smile upon my soul, and speak its Maker’s praise. The fields broke forth into singing, and the trees clapped their hands. The glory of Lebanon was given unto them—the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, because of the glory of God, and the excellency of our God. In man, and beast, I saw the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, shine conspicuously. I was filled with wonder, and felt the utmost tenderness and love for every creature God had made. With glowing admiration I have beheld, and with grateful praise confessed, the inimitable skill of his all-creating hand in the formation of a fly, and the painting of a flower. More especially when I considered,—‘ This is not barely the work of God, but of *my* God, *my* father, and *my* friend.’ When I reflected on death, judgment, heaven, or even hell, it filled me with comfort ; but above all,—at the name of JESUS, my heart took fire, and kindled into love.”

To every mind not incurably sceptical on the subject of vital religion, this beautiful and vivid description, must carry evidence, at once of its reality and power. It is, indeed, convenient for those who place religion in a cold and barren orthodoxy of sentiment, or estimate the excellency of Christianity, merely by the superiority of its moral code to the ethics of a Seneca, or of an Epictetus, to represent such declarations of triumphant joy and confidence in God, as the language of fanaticism and mental delusion. They ought, however, to be reminded, that a prominent doctrine of Him, who spake as never man spake, is, ‘ *Ye must be born again !*’ And, though the announcement may pre-

sent an aspect of as great mystery to them as it did to Nicodemus, neither its truth, nor its authority, can be affected by their unbelieving wonder. 'The spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba ! Father !'—'the peace of God which passeth all understanding'—'the love of God shed abroad in the heart' by the Holy Ghost'—'joy unspeakable and full of glory,'—are among the emphatic expressions that occur in the sacred idiom, to indicate the strong consolations of the genuine Christian. And, apart from the perceptible influence of the Spirit of God, from recumbent trust on the sacrificial blood of the Redeemer, and *conscious* salvation in his name, it is apparent that such blessings can neither be enjoyed nor expected. If happiness is something *experienced*, a religion *not experimental* can, obviously, claim no alliance with true felicity. The hallowed exultation which Mr. Black felt, as the immediate fruit of his pardon, and adoption into the family of God, so powerful that it reflected its own radiant image on every object of his contemplation, making all nature to glow as in its primal bloom and beauty, is in just accordance with the sentiments and aspirations of the saints of God, as exhibited in the divine records. "There be many that say, Who will show us any good ? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." "O send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me ; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles : then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." The New Testament breathes the same spirit of holy and divine exhilaration ;—" Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

and rejoice in hope of the glory of God ; and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." " Whom having not seen, ye love, in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." Unless, then, the Gospel has come down to us stripped of its pristine glory, desolated of its joy-inspiring energy,—that is, unless it has ceased to be ' the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,' he who does believe with the heart unto justification, has the Spirit's testimony of his interest in the paternal love of God ; he has—

" What nothing earthly gives, nor can destroy,—
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy."

It is not, however, thence to be concluded that he is placed on an eminence above the reach of temptation. Exemption from the trial of his faith, is not to be anticipated by the Christian, on this side the goal of eternal felicity. His spiritual life, like the pillar that conducted the march of the Israelites in the desert, has an opaque as well as a luminous aspect ; it is a tissue of temptation and of triumph. It is natural, indeed, amid the incipient joy of reconciliation to God, to think otherwise. The future, as well as the present, then receives its colouring from the ineffable peace experienced within, and exhibits naught to the mind's eye, but a boundless prospect of happiness. Christ appears to address the soul in that loveliest of poetry, " Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land." Who can wonder, if reposing thus under the tree of life, and regaling himself, for the first time, with its ambrosial fruit, the young convert should imagine that

conflict and sorrow are fled away forever, and that the current of his spiritual joy will hold on its expanding course, till it blend with that river, whose streams gladden the city of God. Soon, however, he learns from sad, yet salutary experience, that the paradise into which he has been introduced, is not inaccessible to the serpent. The emancipation of the sinner, from the bondage of Satan, is the signal for his mustering his militant legions to the battle, and making a desperate effort to regain, if possible, his lost supremacy. His fiercest assaults on the Captain of our salvation, were made immediately after the opening heavens poured the radiance around Him, and that illustrious attestation was borne to his dignity and mission, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him!" And if he does not display equal eagerness and impetuosity, in assailing those who have just been rescued from his power, it is not because his malignity does not prompt him to do so, but because he is held in abeyance by 'a stronger than he.' These remarks derive instructive illustration, from the sore temptations which Mr. Black sustained, not many weeks after the Lord had spoken peace to his soul. He was first tempted to question the reality of the work of grace in his heart. "Your joy," suggested the enemy, "is not the joy of the Holy Ghost—you do but deceive yourself; it is your own passions that are moved; you are no Christian still." This cloud was soon dispelled, by a renewed manifestation of the love of God, enabling him with unsuspecting confidence to cry, "My Lord! and my God!" But perpetual serenity did not succeed. A more portentous gloom gathered suddenly around his spirit;—he was tempted to doubt the existence of God. And "with such power," he

says, "was this blasphemous thought injected into my mind, that I do not wonder St. Paul exhorts, 'Above all, take the shield of faith, wherewith ye may be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.' They are well called 'fiery darts'; *darts*, because of the suddenness, and swiftness, with which they fly,—and *fiery* darts, because of their inflammatory nature, setting on fire all the remains of corruption. However, I rejected the thought with the utmost abhorrence. But another soon followed,—'You are no Christian, or such a thought could never have entered your mind; you, surely, are not born again.' With these suggestions I sometimes reasoned to my hurt. I did not always consider that it is no sin to be tempted, unless we make the temptation our own, by giving way to it. I was ignorant of Satan's devices. A few days after, the same suggestion struck me, as if it had been lightning from heaven. Instantly I cried aloud, 'Lord help me!' and it vanished in a moment. I now, in a small degree, began to learn, that the best way to vanquish the enemy, was, not to reason with him, but to fly to God, by prayer and faith. Here I always found help. One day, beginning to reason about my experience,—whether I was indeed a believer :—after great perplexity, I was sweetly comforted by these lines of Mr. Charles Wesley,—

' My Saviour doth not yet appear,
He hides the brightness of his face,—
But shall I therefore let him go ?
And basely to the tempter yield ?
No ! in the strength of Jesus, No !
I never will give up my shield.' "

The cruel and unweariable adversary of his soul still pursued him. His next temptation was, to doubt his

own sincerity. With this he endeavoured to grapple in the strength of reason, but found 'the accuser of the brethren' more than a match for him on that ground, and was compelled to betake himself to the unfailing resource of the tempted believer. His statement of the process and result of this machination, is interesting and monitory :—"After all your profession," said the accuser, "you are only a hypocrite; you pray much, so do hypocrites—you are very exact in all you say, and in all you do;—and, are not they, as touching the law, blameless?"—"But I have faith." "You think so, and do not they think the same?" "But I, have power over sin." "They likewise say they have, but deceive themselves, as you do." "I have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin." "So you conclude; but there is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness." "But the love of God and joy in the Holy Ghost have been shed abroad in my heart." "Many who have been deceived, have thought so. Herod heard John gladly, and did many things; and the stony-ground hearers received the word with joy." Thus all my evidences were disputed as fast as I could produce them. I went into a field, and throwing myself upon the ground, cried, 'O Lord God Almighty! thou who searchest the hearts and triest the reins of the children of men; search and prove me; see if there be any wicked way in me. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I would love thee with all my heart. If I am not in the way of life, Lord show it unto me.' Whilst I was yet speaking, he answered to the joy of my soul, so that I rose and returned, praising God. O what a blessing, to have a throne of grace so free of access.

“ When I first set out in the ways of religion, I thought, if I were but once converted, I should never feel the least wandering desire, or aversion to duty. I concluded, sin would be all destroyed, and I should know war no more. But how mistaken ! Instead of knowing war no more, I found I was but just entering the field of battle. Oh ! the depths of wickedness I saw still in my heart ! Pride—self—unbelief—a hateful brood, loathsome to behold, and contrary to the nature and will of that God, whom in my heart, I loved. Yet they had not the dominion ; the moment they were discovered, my heart rose in indignation against them. I hated, I abhorred them, so that they did not destroy my peace. I still felt the Spirit of God, bearing witness with my spirit, that I was a child of God. But a view of these things greatly humbled me ; and showed me my continual need of the blood of Jesus Christ. It sent me many times to Calvary, where in the ears of my Lord I cried,—

‘ Whate’er in me seems wise or good,
Or strong, I here disclaim ;
I wash my garments in the blood
Of the atoning Lamb.’

“ Never before had I so deep a sense of my vileness, or so great love to Jesus. I could sing with the happy poet,—

‘ With me—no melancholy void ;
No moment lingers unemployed,
Or unimproved below ;
Our weariness of life is gone,
Who live to serve our God alone,
And only him to know.’

“ Now, my days did, indeed, glide sweetly away. I could eat my bread with singleness of heart, praising

God. God's ordinances were delightful to me. I went up to his house with gladness ; and entered his courts with praise. His people were my dearest companions, and, in my view, the excellent of the earth. I was glad when they said unto me, ' Let us go up to the house of the Lord.' My Sabbaths became the most delightful days in all the year. They were market days to my soul ; I fed on marrow and fat things. I mourned when the Sabbath was over , and longed for the return of the next. Time, I saw, was exceedingly precious, and I desired to improve every moment. I could not bear that a single moment should pass without being filled up for God. Hence, when called to dinner, I grudged the time spent in eating, and frequently retired into my closet. I thought I would have time for prayer, if I even took that time from my meals."

Thus happy himself in the divine favour, and touched with the expansive sympathies of the love of Christ, he ardently desired that all might live for Him, who died for them. The first object of his anxious and prayerful solicitude was, that salvation might come to his father's house, that the whole family might obtain redemption. And the wonderful manner in which his prayers were answered, and his efforts crowned, in reference to this object, we have already seen in his letter to Mr. Wesley. This was matter of inexpressible gratitude, and afforded him high encouragement in his endeavours to be useful to others. He dilates, in his journal, with conscious satisfaction, on the blessed change produced in his father's family by their conversion to God :—And it will not be matter of surprise that, as he relates, he once heard his father, in conversation with an opposer of religion, triumphant-

ly appeal to its effects in his own family as a striking confirmation of its truth and utility ; and allege, that hundreds of pounds would be a small consideration compared with the good, of which, even in a temporal respect, it had been productive to him. So true is it, that "godliness is profitable unto all things ; having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The prolific source, as well of domestic as of personal infelicity, is—a wrong state of heart. Before the effect cease, the cause must therefore be removed. Education and refinement, aided by a natural amiableness of temper, may indeed do much, in the absence of piety to God, to heighten the enjoyments that flow from 'all the charities of father, son, and brother.' These, however, are never so tenderly cherished, nor so advantageously exhibited, as when hallowed by the love of the Saviour. He best consults the interest and happiness of himself and of his family in both worlds, who makes them acquainted with the holy scriptures, daily leads them to the domestic altar, and maintains, in the order of his household, a system of godly discipline. And it is gratifying to reflect "on what vantage-ground the conscientious Christian father here stands ! The springs of public and social life may be greatly corrupted ; the nation in which he dwells may degenerate into licentiousness, into idolatry, or into the most daring infidelity. Retiring then to this sacred enclosure, he may entrench himself, and there, lifting up a standard for God, either wait the approach of better days, or leave a few behind him, on whom the best blessings of those days will certainly descend. Though the heavens be shut up and there be no dew, the little enclosure which he cultivates, like the fleece of Gideon, will

discover evident marks of the divine favour. It actually seems as though in the wide scene, where the vices of the age may and can reign triumphant, this were some secure and sacred retreat, into which they cannot, dare not enter."^{*} Admitting the accuracy of this view of parental control, it must appear alike animating and awful,—*animating*, since it affords ground to reckon upon so high a remuneration of faithful effort—*awful*, because the amount of responsibility must be in proportion to the power of doing good. The preceding remarks are important and encouraging to pious youth who reside in families where religion has not acquired an ascendant influence. By adorning their profession with a coincident deportment, by cherishing a tender concern for the salvation of their parents, and the various members of the domestic circle, and expressing that concern in affectionate but unobtrusive endeavours to win them to Christ, they may be honoured, as the subject of our narrative was, in depositing a leaven of piety in the bosom of their families that will pervade and assimilate to itself all that are in the house. In the success which the Lord granted to Mr. Black's zealous efforts to build an altar to his name in the house of his father, there was afforded a cheering presage and pledge of the signal blessing that was destined to accompany him in the wider scene of exertion which soon opened before him.

* Anderson on the Domestic Constitution.

CHAPTER III.

MR. BLACK'S AFFECTING VIEWS OF THE STATE OF THE UNREGENERATE—HIS LOVE TO SOULS AND FIRST LABOURS TO BRING SINNERS TO GOD—IS ARRESTED WITH SEVERAL OTHERS BY A PARTY OF SOLDIERS WHILE ENGAGED IN DIVINE WORSHIP—THE WORK OF GOD ADVANCES—MR. ALLINE'S FIRST VISIT TO CUMBERLAND—HIS CHARACTER AND CREED—MR. ALLINE'S DOCTRINES OCCASION A SCHISM—MR. BLACK AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-ONE GIVES HIMSELF WHOLLY TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY—EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL.

WHATEVER there may have been peculiar in the call, and preeminent in the character of the Apostles of our Lord, it is not more certain that they, in nature, were men of like passions with us, than that we, in grace, must be men of like sentiments and feelings with them. Amid a thousand diversities of a secondary nature, there may always be traced, between those who are born of God, what has not inaptly been called a *family likeness*. The grand test of the genealogy of the spirit, is the love of God. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." From this affection, brotherly kindness and universal benevolence are inseparable. Such was the spirit that animated those whom the Redeemer first invited and appointed to labour in his cause. To those who contemplated their character under the influence of earth-

ly views and maxims they appeared beside themselves ; and in the same light will their successors in spirit ever be regarded by men of corrupt minds, who have neither grace to sympathise with their emotions, nor understanding to appreciate their principles.

We have seen the divine love which Mr. Black breathed, in the first raptures of spiritual joy, forthwith developing itself in his own family, and then receiving the utmost gratification that successful effort could afford. But the tender and diffusive solicitude for the salvation of souls that now warmed his breast was not to be circumscribed by the walls of his dwelling, nor satisfied with the amount of good he was made instrumental in achieving there. He thus judged, that if one died for all then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again. Hear himself :—" I felt a peculiar love for souls. I seldom passed any man, woman, or child, without lifting up my heart to God in their behalf, or passed a house without praying for all in it—that God would open their eyes and give them to see the miseries of their natural state, and make them to taste his love. It grieved me from day to day to see men live so ignorant of God and happiness ; and I was many times constrained to speak to them, though I sometimes experienced rough treatment in return." An instance of this kind occurred soon after he had renounced the works of darkness, and felt it his duty to reprove them: He was spending an evening at the house of a friend. He had been there but a short time, when Mr. F. D., accompanied by Mrs. U., a lady of high respectability, entered. Mr. D., with equal impiety and discourtesy, immediately began to ridicule religion ; and

expressed a wish that there were some young ladies present, that they might have what he termed, "a good dance." Mr. Black took the liberty of animadverting upon the practice as a waste of precious time, and inaccordant with correct views of Christian duty. But his admonitions were instantly repulsed with—"Not at all, Sir; I can dance this hour, and be as devout as any man the next." Mrs. U., who it would seem was unaware of the change that had taken place in Mr. Black's principles and practice, thinking to involve him in a charge of inconsistency, reminded him that she had seen *him* dance. "True, Madam," he replied, "you have; but I was at that time ignorant of God, and in the broad way to destruction." Supper came upon the table, and Mr. Morse asked the divine blessing. During supper Mr. D. talked very foolishly; and then leaping from his seat said aloud, "The Lord help us to eat and be fat." Shocked by his irreverence Mr. Black rebuked him sharply, and warned him of the consequences of persisting in his present course. He flew into a rage and menaced his benefactor with personal injury. In vain did Mr. Black endeavour to appease him, by assuring him of the benevolence of his intentions, and that he was really his friend. "I want no such friends," said he, and left the house in a storm of passion. Such a close of the interview predicted no happy result. But the words of the wise are as goads; and the effort to resist them often has the effect of causing them to pierce the deeper. A considerable time after this Mr. Black recognised in his congregation at Tantramar the same individual listening with deep attention to the word; and was not more gratified than surprised to observe, that during his visit in that part of the coun-

try, Mr. D. was unfailing in his attendance on preaching. He accompanied Mr. Black on his return to Amherst; disclosed to him the deep distress of his soul; and on their stopping at the house of a mutual friend, requested that Mr. Black would pray with him. While they were engaged in prayer, his distress became more aggravated and insupportable; he vehemently cried for mercy; and after rising from his knees, begged Mr. Black to forgive him the insults he had offered him two years previously. We are happy in being able to add, that he not long after proved the faithfulness of Him who hath said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Impelled by the love of Christ, and animated by the success that was graciously afforded to his first endeavours to do good, Mr. Black now seized with eagerness every opportunity of speaking what he knew, and testifying what he had seen of the grace of God. At a Quarterly Meeting held at Mr. Truman's, in the summer of 1780, he experienced an abundant blessing; and, as a natural consequence, felt a more overwhelming sense than ever, of the value of souls for whom Christ died. "It was a time," he says, "long to be remembered by me and by many. I longed vehemently that all should know the preciousness of Christ. I had a deep sense of their unhappy condition while strangers to the grace of God; and could not refrain from weeping, and scarcely from speaking. I thought I could willingly sacrifice my life upon a gibbet for them, if I could only have thereby convinced them of their folly, and brought them to Jesus. The same evening we met again at Fort Lawrence. I then gave vent to the fulness of my heart, and beseeched all present by the mercies of

God and the worth of their souls, not to quench the Spirit of God, and destroy themselves eternally. Our next meeting was at Amherst. I could not refrain from beseeching them with tears, to be reconciled to God. Many were deeply affected, particularly my father; and many were very happy. In a special manner, William Morrel, with floods of tears testified the sweetness of Christ. I now began to exhort or pray at almost every meeting. God was with us, of a truth, both to convince and to comfort. Seldom did we meet together, but the presence of God was felt in the midst of us! The Lord stood by my weakness, and his Spirit helped my infirmities. So that though my knees at the first have smote one against the other, yet God loosed my tongue, and I was enabled to speak with confidence, liberty, and tender affection."

"The following winter I was invited to Tantramar, to give a word of exhortation there. I went. God sent the word with power to the hearts of the people; an awakening took place immediately; many, both young and old, began to inquire the way to Zion, and many believed in Jesus." His hands were strengthened more in the good work in which he felt a growing interest, by the zealous co-operation of his brethren in Christ—Messrs. Scurr, Wells, and Fawkender, who with him, deeply commiserated the condition of the scattered population around them, and endeavoured, as they could, to supply their destitution of the means of grace, by dividing their labour on the Lord's day, among the rising settlements within their reach. They accomplished much, at a time when few of those settlements were favoured with even the occasional visits of regular ministers. Nor was their word permitted to fall to the ground; in every place the hand of the

Lord was with them, and they were cheered by unequivocal evidences of the salutary and saving effect of their exertions. In their labour of love, they had to encounter but little hostility, save the opprobrious epithets attached to them, by unreasonable and wicked men. To this general tranquility, there was indeed one exception. One of their meetings was broken up by a party of Soldiers, who made prisoners of more than twenty while they were engaged in worshipping God. The Commander of the garrison, strange to relate, in consequence of some representations he received from the Church minister, deemed it his duty to endeavour the suppression of their meetings. But he soon discovered that he was guilty of an unauthorised interference with the rights of his Majesty's peaceful subjects, and was glad to dismiss his guiltless prisoners with soft words. They, believing that their persecutors had been misled and that, having discovered their error, they would not be likely to repeat it, patiently endured the wrong, without seeking further redress. This opposition, instead of impeding the work, tended to accelerate and spread it. It advanced in various parts of the country, during the winter, with great rapidity and power.

In the spring of 1781, they were visited by the Rev. Henry Alline of Falmouth, (N. S.) He is described by Mr. Black as a man of no learning, but distinguished by a lively imagination, and strong mental powers; zealous in the cause of God, and labouring fervently to promote it. His preaching was at first attended with a special blessing; many were awakened, and professed to receive the grace of God. His views on many points were characterised by a species of mysticism, and in their practical tendency, were decided-

ly *antinomian*. These, however, he studiously kept in the shade, until he had acquired that influence among many, which is usually yielded to spiritual teachers by those to whom they have been rendered eminently useful. To persons of this class, who had a predilection for Calvinian doctrines, Mr. Alline did not hesitate, it seems, to speak slightly of Mr. Wesley. This was matter of painful regret to some, who held the founder of Methodism in affectionate veneration as their father in the Lord. It was particularly so to Mr. Black, who had derived much instruction and profit from his invaluable writings, and was indebted, under the divine blessing, to members of his Society, for his knowledge of salvation. The seeds of division were thus sown, and in process of time greatly diminished and deteriorated the harvest that would otherwise, in all probability, have been produced by the good seed of the kingdom.

Mr. Alline remained with them about seven or eight weeks ; and for some time after his departure, the work was still progressive. "About two hundred" says Mr. Black, "met regularly in the class, and God was eminently with us. Of these, one hundred and thirty or more professed faith in Christ. Shortly after Mr. C. paid us a visit at Mr. Alline's request, or rather *solemn charge* ; for, by letter, he charged him in God's name, to go to Cumberland immediately. He waited on Mr. Alline before he came, who intreated him to keep none of his opinions back, and enforced it by informing him that he had freely spoken *his*. Mr. C. took the advice, and a flood of antinomianism, mingled with mysticism, was soon poured forth. Several of the friends talked with him, but to no purpose. Ten of the principal friends wrote to him, pointing out the impropriety of his con-

duct, and informing him that if he persisted in preaching such doctrines, they could not continue to hear him. But before the letter reached his hands he had left Amherst, and never returned. Though he was gone, his doctrines took root, and presently caused a division; but this was in some measure made up again after a few weeks." During the winter, those who had been brought into the Church continued to meet in classes, and appeared alive to the necessity of maintaining the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. There was wanting, however, that clear and comprehensive knowledge of the Christian system, necessary to give perpetuity to this desirable state of things, by enabling them to discriminate the theories of men from the verities of Biblical truth. In the spring of 1782, Mr. Alline paid them a second visit. At this time Mr. Black happened to be at Windsor; and during his absence, seventy withdrew from the Wesleyan Society, and adopting the views of Mr. Alline, attached themselves to him. Mr. Alline's religious tenets were a singular combination of heterogeneous materials derived from various and opposite sources. They were fragments of different systems,—without coherence, and without any mutual relation or dependence. With the strong assertion of man's freedom as a moral agent, he connected the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints. He allegorised to such excess the plainest narratives and announcements of Scripture, that the obvious and unsophisticated import of the words of inspiration was often entirely lost amidst the reveries of mysticism. He held the writings of the Reverend William Law in high estimation; and associated some of the most extravagant views of that author, with others of a kin-

dred nature, which appear to have been peculiar to himself. It is but justice to add, that amidst all his extravagances of opinion, his eminent and uniform piety entitle him to be ranked with those Mystics whom Dr. Haweis thus eulogises in his Church History :—" Among those called Mystics, I am persuaded some were found, who loved God out of a pure heart fervently; and though they were ridiculed and reviled for proposing a disinterestedness of love without other motives, and as professing to feel in the enjoyment of the temper itself, an abundant reward, their holy and heavenly conversation will carry a stamp of religion upon it."

To resume the thread of our narrative—Mr. Black's engagements in holding meetings in various parts of the country soon became so frequent, that a demand was made upon his intellectual effort, which in the order of his first exhortations he had not anticipated, in order to prevent a *sameness* from characterising his addresses. The recurrence of the same themes to his mind, whenever he endeavoured to speak to the people in the name of the Lord, and the difficulty of diversifying his topics, suggested to him the expediency of taking a text. His first trembling attempt in this way, was made while on a visit to the people settled on the Petitcodiac River, in the Spring of 1781. He found them lamentably ignorant of the things of God, and, with few exceptions, apparently unsusceptible of any serious interest in the subject. But the word was not wholly ineffective. Some were pierced with keen conviction. Among these was Christian Steeves, a German, who was deeply awakened; and on Mr. Black's next visit experienced, through faith in the blood of Christ, the joy of divinely attested pardon.

Between forty and fifty years after that period, the writer of these memoirs preached in Mr. Steeves's house, and found the good old man steadfast in the covenant of his God, and full of a hope blooming with immortality. He alluded with thrilling emotion to the period when Mr. Black first visited them, bringing the glad tidings of great joy, and testified with eyes streaming with tears of gratitude to God, that the gospel was like its author and finisher, to-day as yesterday, the same.

Up to the 10th of November, 1731, Mr. Black continued under the paternal roof, making himself as useful as he could in the surrounding country, consistently with his filial obligations. From that time he dedicated himself, with the concurrence of his parents, to the work of the Lord unreservedly; actuated by a conviction that such was his providential sphere of action, and animated with the hallowed ambition of shining forever in the distinguished glory of those, who turn many to righteousness.

In taking this important step he conferred not with flesh and blood. No earthly calculations influenced his decision. Nor did he embark in an enterprise of such magnitude without first sitting down and counting the cost. He surveyed with tremulous solicitude, and deeply felt his insufficiency for, an office whose dignity would reflect honour upon an angel, and whose difficulty might well deter an archangel from assuming it, without the call and co-operation of the Divine Spirit. Still urged forward by the impulses of redeeming love, and a heart-stirring view of the danger and worth of souls, and sustained by the inspiring hope of succours from on high commensurate with his necessities, he could confidently say,—

“ I argue not
Against Heaven’s hand, or will ; nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope ; but still bear up and steer
Right onward.”

Mr. Black was now of age. And it is interesting and delightful to witness the promptitude and zeal with which, immediately upon being thus exempted to a certain extent from parental control, he consecrated his service to the Lord, his heavenly father. The commencement of his regular labors in the Gospel of Christ, and the auspicious tokens of divine approbation by which he was cheered in this, the opening of his career, shall be exhibited by his own pen.

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“ I left home the 10th of November, on a second visit to Petitcodiac. Preached the next day at Mr. Scurr’s, and the day following at Tantrammar—both precious times to many. On the 13th, I set out for Memamcook, and preached in the evening from Rev. xx : 15 ; some were deeply affected. On the 14th, arrived at Hillsborough, where I preached to the Germans, and early next morning set off in a log canoe for French Village. After a very dangerous passage, arrived safe, about twelve o’clock, and preached twice, but felt little life either time, particularly the last.

“ Friday, 16th.—I preached in the morning at the Village. It was a comfortable time. I left them in tears, and set forward for the head of the river, where I preached twice. God sent the word with softening power to the hearts of the people.

“ Saturday, 17th.—I had a happy morning,—felt the Lord precious,—walked to the Village and preached with unusual freedom. At one I took my leave of them from 2 Cor. xiii : 11, expecting to go down the

river with the tide. The Lord accompanied the word with great power; weeping was upon every hand; they importunately entreated me to tarry longer with them; I consented; for I knew not how, under such circumstances, to leave them. Oh! what a day was this to me; my soul was indeed happy. Glory be to thy name, O Lord, forever!

“Sunday, 18th.—Preached from 1 John ii: 12. Many were deeply affected. One sturdy servant of the devil roared aloud for mercy. Soon after the meeting began, the word fastened on his conscience, and, lest he should be heard to cry aloud, he left the house; but returning again, the word pierced him as before. He attempted to leave the house a second time, but he could no longer restrain his feelings. After preaching again in the afternoon, I set off for the lower settlements in a small canoe, leaving many in tears. About dark we reached Hillsborough. God gave me to speak feelingly to the people; the word was with power. I yielded to their entreaties not to go with the next tide as I had proposed.

“Monday, 19th.—I discoursed from Matt. xviii: 9—15. God was with us; it was a moving time; many were in great distress, as appeared from their heaving breasts, and weeping eyes. It was a delightful morning to me; I enjoyed a divine sense of the love of Jesus, and felt an earnest desire for the welfare of those poor souls. Our canoe having gone adrift in the night, I was under the necessity of remaining with them another day. I perceived the word had taken deep root in many of their minds, affording ground to hope for much fruit.

“Tuesday, 20th.—Commended them to the grace of God and departed. Preached at Memramcook in the

evening. Many here, also, were much affected, and wept most of the time. The Lord seal instruction on their hearts. A little after sunrise next morning, I addressed them, and then set off for Tantrammar, where I preached in the evening with very great liberty. Jesus was in the midst of us, both to wound and to comfort. Many were remarkably happy, and longed to put off the garment of mortality. One little girl, about seven or eight years of age, got up on a form, and told, in a wonderful manner, what Jesus had done for her soul. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he can, and does perfect praise. It is now eight days since I left this place, in which I have preached eighteen times, and, excepting two meetings, I know not a single occasion on which it was not evident that many, who heard the word, were melted into tears, if they did not cry aloud for mercy. On the 22d, I called upon my youthful brethren, to Remember their Creator in the days of their youth, &c., and in the evening preached with liberty from Micah vi : 8.

“ Saturday, 24th.—Preached twice ; the latter meeting was a wonderful season. Many poor sinners were deeply convinced ; some said their hearts were almost broken under a sense of their want of Christ. Others, who came with heavy hearts, returned home greatly rejoicing.

“ Sunday, 25th.—Preached in the evening with much liberty ; and many were refreshed. Part of this day I was in a lively frame, but experienced much dulness the remainder of it. O Lord, revive my soul, and quicken me, a poor unworthy creature ; unworthy to eat of the crumbs that fall from my Master’s table !

“ Monday, 26th.—I rode to Mr. Scurr’s, where I spent the following day. Alas ! I felt very little sense

of God's special presence ; in the evening I preached, but with little comfort. Lord quicken my drowsy powers !

“ Wednesday, 28th.—By God's blessing I arrived at home in safety. This was a profitable journey to me. I now continued my labours, visiting the friends at Amherst, Fort Lawrence, Prospect, and Tantramar, for about five weeks ; and sorely grieved I was, to see the enemy likely to obtain a great advantage by antinomian doctrine, which made many oppose that precious word of God which was once as the food of their souls ; and inveigh against their brethren, because they warned them of their danger. Under pretence of avoiding legality, the commandments of God, than fine gold more precious, were dressed up as scarecrows ; and to enforce them on the conscience was looked upon as a mark of our ignorance, if not of our being total strangers to the Gospel of Jesus. This was peculiarly afflictive to me. Even some of my own children rose up against me. Hence, when Mr. Alline came in the Spring following, they totally separated from us. The work now seemed to be at a stand. The strength of their zeal was turned upon maintaining their peculiar opinions. Striving thus, more for victory than for truth, the spirit of seriousness gradually declined ; and for a considerable time few were either convinced or converted. **ICHABOD** might now have been written upon our walls, for the glory of love had departed from us, as a body.”

The machinations of Satan were thus to a melancholy extent successful, in impeding the progress, and shading the lustre of the Gospel, among a people who, had they not, unhappily for their spiritual progress, been turned aside to what the Apostle emphatically

calls (*Ματαιολογία*) *vain jangling*,—trifling and profitless speculations, might have exhibited a delightful specimen of Christian harmony, and mutual edification in their most holy faith. We cannot wonder at the gloom that pervades Mr. Black's delineation of those occurrences; but must rather sympathise in the sorrowing emotions by which it was dictated. It is indeed a trial of no ordinary magnitude to a minister of Christ, to see those whom he has been the instrument of bringing to God, and for whose souls he has watched as one who must give account, severed from him by the adoption of new views, which evince their unhallowed operation in alienated affection, and in the indulgence of a disputatious and uncharitable spirit. There is nothing, however, in the present case, of a nature peculiar or unprecedented. The introduction of the seeds of discord among the disciples of Christ is an old artifice of the Evil One; and its disastrous success is recorded on almost every page of the history of the Church. Multitudes, who would instinctively recoil from the first suggestion of gross and palpable transgression, are not proof against the seductive speculations of error, which often, though by a path more circuitous, yet not less fatal, draw the soul away from the love of the TRUTH, which alone maketh free. It is well observed by Baxter, that 'Satan hath religious diversions for those who are above sensuality.' Aware too, that from dissonance of sentiment among brethren, more especially when their antagonist principles are often brought into collision, the transition to mutual uncharitableness and crimination, is natural and almost inevitable, where he cannot destroy unanimity of affection amongst them *directly*, he will endeavour to accomplish his malignant pur-

pose *indirectly*, by generating a diversity of views and interests. In unnumbered instances has he in this way arrested the work of God, and changed the church from a mansion of love into an arena of fierce and acrimonious debate; the vitality of religion has in consequence pined, if not utterly perished, amid the conflict of opinion; and infidels, glad of the opportunity to impugn religion itself, because of the inconsistency of its votaries, have exclaimed with malicious triumph,—

————— *tantene animis caelestibus ira?*

In heavenly minds can such fierce zeal exist?

When shall this reproach be rolled away from the door of the Christian Church? If not until all who experience the grace, and practically recognise the authority of the Redeemer, perfectly accord in their views on all points of religious inquiry,—the plurality of causes that are constantly operating to preclude such a general agreement, must awaken apprehensions that the turbid stream of contention must mingle interminably with the waters of the sanctuary. But this surely is not necessary. Amidst all the diversities of sentiment that exist among those who coincide in maintaining the fundamental truths of the Gospel, there is ground of sufficient breadth, and pre-eminently holy, still left on which they may stand, and keep—what is of infinitely greater moment than a mere accordance of speculative opinion—‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’

For the information of the reader, who may wish to know to what extent the principles inculcated by Mr. Alline were diffused in the Provinces, and what became of his followers, it may be proper to add a few particulars. His labours, and those of his coadjutors,

produced at that period a very strong sensation ; and resulted in the formation of churches in various parts of the country zealously attached to his peculiar views, who, from their pretensions to superior illumination in the things of God, were designated *New Lights*. Mr. Alline's career was short ; and after his death those churches, of which he had been the founder, soon declined. Many who had been members of them subsequently united with the Baptists ; others neither associated with any department of the Church, nor maintained the institutions of religion among themselves, but sank into a state of spiritual lethargy. Very few of them now exist as a distinct people. There is still, however, one church of this persuasion at Falmouth, near Windsor ; in which there are members whose deep, uniform, and unsuspected piety, are truly ornamental to their Christian profession.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS ON PROVIDENCE—MR. BLACK VISITS PETIT-CODIAC—IS INTRODUCED TO MISS GAY, AFTERWARDS MRS. BLACK—HER CONVERSION—HIS FIRST VISIT TO CORNWALLIS, HORTON, PALMOUTH, WINDSOR, AND HALIFAX—REFLECTIONS ON A SUICIDE—INTERVIEW WITH A PERSON IN DESPAIR—HIS FIRST VISIT TO ANNAPOLIS—THE EFFECTS OF MR. ALLINE'S INFLUENCE AT AMHERST—MR. BLACK PUBLISHES A SERMON PREACHED AT WINDSOR—HIS CONTROVERSY WITH A CLERGYMAN—HIS FAITHFULNESS IN WARNING A SET OF PLUNDERERS.

THE operations of Providence in the history of individuals, as well as of nations, are replete with instruction. They form a practical revelation of the Deity. The student of this volume, from his incapacity correctly to appreciate, at all times, the motives of human conduct, or to predict the results of the divine procedure from its partial developments, is indeed admonished to be extremely careful in the investigation of facts, and equally cautious in deducing conclusions from them. But it sometimes happens that the purposes of divine providence are so luminous, that, like the sun, they are seen by their own light; and this is, perhaps, most frequently the case, when they concur, or rather coalesce, with the influence of grace in the production of effects that have an immediate bearing upon character and eternity,

From the close affinity that subsists between the doctrine of a special providence and that of divine grace, the opponents of the latter have ever been distinguished by hostility to the former. The speculative theist, it is true, has no objection that the Deity occupy himself in regulating the machinery of the material universe, provided he do not concern himself with the world of *mind*. He may sit throned in empyreal light, and bend an eye radiant with complacency on the unnumbered suns and systems that roll beneath his feet; illustrating, by the harmony of their movements, the consummate wisdom of the general laws and arrangements by which they are controlled; but he must leave the heart of man unvisited and the conscience of man undisturbed.—And for this “pompous inanity,” forsooth, we must give up the Scripture doctrine of Providence; “of which (in the words of the pious Hooker concerning Law) there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both angels and men, and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.”

The agency of divine providence, in connection with Mr. Black's call to the ministry, and the wide and interesting scene of its exercise, becomes progressively conspicuous, as we follow him in his ardent race of usefulness. The population of Nova Scotia amounted probably to about twelve thousand souls when he began to preach. In many parts the people were wholly destitute of the means of grace; and in others their

salutary influence was neutralized by the unevangelical character of those who conducted them ; while, as we have already seen, Mr. Alline and his coadjutors blended principles of a most pernicious tendency with the inculcation of living godliness. At such a period, and under such circumstances, the energies of Mr. Black's enlightened zeal were most opportunely put forth ; and so unsparing was his activity, that in a few years, the beneficial influence of his labours was more or less felt throughout almost the entire extent of the Province.

January 9th, 1782, he writes thus : " I set off in company with another to visit our friends on the Petitcodiac river. We arrived at Memramcook that night. Here I left a young woman in great distress, two days after which God set her soul at liberty. On the 10th I preached, and we had an affecting meeting. We then set out for the French settlement on the north side of the river, and tarried that night at a French house, where we had a little straw for our bed, and about two yards of wrapper to cover us, one of the coldest nights during the winter. The next day we proceeded on our journey, walking about nineteen miles on snow-shoes, and were of course much fatigued. I preached from Sam. i : 12, but experienced no liberty.

" Sunday, 13th.—I preached at the village. Many were deeply affected, and declared, with tears, that they sought the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. After preaching, I walked to the head of the river, a distance of about nine miles.

" Monday, 14th.—I preached twice, and on the following day returned to the village. On visiting Mr. Hopper, I found him rejoicing in God. He informed

me that he found deliverance on the preceding day soon after we had left. While I was preaching from 'What think ye of Christ?' it was a time of power. The dry bones shook and trembled. In the evening, while engaged in prayer with John Mittin, God gave him the spirit of adoption. He could do little else the whole night but praise the Lord, being too happy to sleep.

"Wednesday, 16th.—I went on snow-shoes to Ricar's Point, and preached in the evening, but the people appeared quite unmoved. The following day I walked to Hillsborough, where I was received with joy. In the evening I addressed them from Rev. xx : 12. God owned his word! Many were in sore distress, and one found comfort.

"Monday, 21st.—After walking about twenty miles on snow-shoes, preached in the evening on the case of the woman who had an issue of blood. Many were deeply affected. One, in particular, cried out, 'Oh! Mr. Black, what shall I do to be saved? My heart is ready to break.' I pointed him to Jesus. Two men told me that God had set their souls at liberty. One of them, I fear, took up with something short of Jesus Christ. But the Lord trieth the hearts.

"Tuesday, 22d.—I discoursed from Ps. xevi : 18. God spake, and the people trembled! Little did I expect to see such a work among this people. They hung around me, eager to catch every word. Some leaned on my shoulders, and with tears said, 'Oh! that my eyes were opened—Oh! that I could receive my sight,'—with many such expressions.

"Wednesday, 23d.—After preaching at the village, I left the people in tears, and set forth for home. We spent the night at Mr. A. Trite's, where I preached

from Matt. xxiii : 46. One young man trembled exceedingly, and exclaimed, ' Oh ! my heart is ready to break. Lord, if thou dost not save I am undone, &c.' About bed-time, I heard him praying and crying in the bitterness of his soul, in the barn. The next morning we commended them to the grace of God, and left for Memramcook." Mr. Black and his associate stopped the night at a French house, where their accommodations were even less comfortable than on the previous occasion, being without any covering whatever. The cold was very intense ; but for any privation they endured on this account, they felt themselves abundantly recompensed by the mighty joy created in their souls in the review of what God had wrought. Manifestations of the divine love, more than usually bright and blessed, were vouchsafed to Mr. Black at this period ; and while they afforded him refreshing assurances that himself and his labours were acceptable to God, they operated as motives to unsparing dedication to his service and glory. " O God !" he exclaims from the fulness of a confiding and exultant heart, " O God ! thou art MY God, forever and ever !"

A declaration of confidence in God so unequivocal and joyous, we naturally regard as a most auspicious omen. In our own case, and in that of others, we are apt to consider overwhelming visitations of redeeming power as harbingers of a long and unshaded day of spiritual enjoyment. Not unfrequently, however, from whatever cause, clouds suddenly arise to obscure the Sun of Righteousness ; fears that were supposed to have fled forever, return ; and fresh trials of faith and patience await us. Restraining prayer before God,—omitting to guard by watchfulness what we

have already attained,—illuminated by the Holy Spirit to discover more clearly the lingering corruption of our hearts, or made painfully sensible of it by the force and incipient success of some unexpected temptation, the garments of praise are exchanged for the spirit of heaviness, and the song of triumph for the language of despondency. The greater part of the last week of January was occupied by Mr. Black in mourning over the pride and barrenness of his own heart. His attempts to warn sinners, and to set forth the riches of redeeming grace to a perishing world, were not attended with the usual degree of celestial unction. He complains of his apathy, and in self despair renews his application to the merciful Redeemer. Reproaching himself with frequent wanderings from God, he adds, “O my God ! I hate this *self*, but I will not give up my claim to *thee*.”

FEBRUARY commenced under more cheering auspices. On the first of the month he preached at his friend Mr. Donkin’s, and the power of the Lord was eminently manifested. Amid the devout ecstasy of his soul, recent trials and discouragements, if not forgotten, served but to heighten his joy in God. With this joy there were connected fervent aspirations after full redemption, the discriminative test of the celestial origin of the bliss he experienced.

February 9th, he preached at Mr. Oxley’s, from John ix : 4, and declares, “I know not that I ever felt a stronger desire after holiness in all my life.” The remaining time till the 17th March, he occupied visiting the different places in and about Cumberland and Nappan, where societies had been formed, or preaching introduced, testifying to all, that gospel, which, in a cheering number of instances, had exhibited its saving

energy among the inhabitants. Having completed his pastoral tour in this section of the country, he again repaired to Petitcodiac. Here he had the happiness to find the work progressive. Several were rejoicing in God. Some who on his previous visit were awakened, he found walking in the light of life. Thence he went to Shepody, and derived increased satisfaction from the zeal and love he there witnessed in those who had attached themselves to the society. "Many," he says, "were stirred up, and appeared fully determined to seek God as their only portion." On the 3d of April he returned to Memramcook. In reaching this destination he had a very perilous passage. The hope of safety was for some time extremely faint. In this extremity all within was calm. The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, kept his heart and mind by Christ Jesus. He felt himself in the hands of his heavenly Father, and had no solicitude for the event. "Had my divine master," says he, "thought meet to call me away, I felt quite reconciled to a watery grave; I knew I had a house in heaven." He continues—"I returned on the 4th to Tantramar, leaving some in great distress. On Sunday I preached at the school-house. It was a time long to be remembered by many." On the 9th he reached Cumberland, and was introduced to Miss Gay, who had manifested deep concern for the salvation of her soul. This estimable female, subsequently Mr. Black's wife, whose praise is in all the churches with which he was associated, encountered much opposition when she first earnestly engaged in the service of God, from a quarter that rendered it peculiarly painful. A few days after this interview, on the 12th of the same month, while Mr. Black was preaching from Exodus xxxii : 26,

Miss Gay experienced redemption in the blood of Christ, and, with a decision that never vacillated, took her position *on the Lord's side*.

The intermediate time between this and the 21st of May was appropriated by Mr. Black to the renewed visitation of all the societies he had been instrumental in forming, and edifying in their most holy faith, throughout Cumberland. The steady progression of the work of God, or its stability even, for any length of time, was scarcely to be anticipated under circumstances, in many respects so inauspicious. Of those who were capable of leading the people in the absence of Mr. Black, the number was small; and there was a still greater paucity of persons qualified to conduct the public worship of God among them. From so inadequate and irregular a supply of the means of grace, it was in the natural tendency of things, that not only cases of individual unfaithfulness, but in some instances, the decay of religious feeling among whole classes, should take place. The characteristic order of Mr. Black's zeal—the deep and absorbing interest he felt in the final salvation of those whom he had been the means of turning to righteousness, rendered him susceptible of proportional distress, when they disappointed his benignant anticipations. Imbued with the expansive charity of Paul, who enjoyed all that in his generous estimation was worthy of the name of *life*, when his spiritual children *stood fast in the Lord*, nothing gave him greater pain than to see those whom he regarded with similar sentiments, becoming weary in well doing, and forfeiting their claim to a crown of righteousness. From such causes of depression he did not enjoy a complete exemption on occasion of his present visits. With paternal sorrow he had to la-

ment the instability of some of whom he had hoped better things. But over many others, he had cause to rejoice, since *they* were his witnesses, that he had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. To the various aspects presented by the work of God among this people, may be attributed, in a good degree, the correspondent alternations of feeling in regard to his own personal enjoyment, which we find Mr. Black expressing in connection with this excursion.

The word of the Lord was precious in those days. Scattered over a wide extent of country, and far removed from the sanctuaries where their fathers worshipped, the population, in many parts, seldom heard a sermon. This privation was deeply felt by a few, who in the father land had been nourished in the verdant pastures of salvation, but were now as sheep without either shepherd or sustenance. Such spiritual destitution made an irresistible appeal to Mr. Black's heart. Disproportioned to his utmost energies as was the magnitude of the field, to the cultivation of which he had already devoted himself, his benevolent wishes took a wider sweep, and his compassions yearned over *the regions beyond*. The rising village of Windsor attracted his special attention. Actuated by a conviction that it was his duty to carry thither the message of redeeming mercy, he took the resolution to go in the strength of the Lord. On leaving Cumberland for this purpose, his mind was deeply dejected, from an apprehension that, as the consolations of God were then small with himself, he could not reasonably anticipate efficiency in his endeavours to promote the happiness of others. These feelings became so poignant on the way as almost to deter him from proceeding. These are his own words: "O, in what a luke-

warm, Laodicean frame have I been since I left Cumberland! I am ready to question my call to visit Windsor. O Lord! surely thou wilt not send me to quicken others, and permit me to remain thus lifeless *myself*." The packet in which he intended to cross the basin of Minas direct to Windsor, had sailed before he reached Partridge Island; but an opportunity of proceeding by the way of Cornwallis soon presented itself, which he was glad to embrace. From the circumstances and the sequel, it would seem that this circuitous course was marked out for him by the finger of Divine Providence. At Cornwallis he was cordially received and hospitably entertained by Gideon Sherman, Esquire, a gentleman who appears to have been distinguished by a love of good men, unrestricted by the shackles of bigotry. The Baptists, to whose zeal and exertions in the cause of the Redeemer, and recently in the cause of education also, the province of Nova Scotia is largely indebted, had previously established a church in this place. They hailed with pleasure the appearance among them of this unexpected visitant, and invited him to occupy their place of worship on the Lord's day, the 26th May. He preached to them in the morning and afternoon. God was graciously present on both occasions; but it might be said with emphasis, The voice of the Lord was *heard* in the *cool* of the day. Mr. Black, addressing a congregation, many of whom differed widely from himself in doctrines of secondary consideration, judiciously selected a theme which is, to all real Christians, the radiant centre of unity and attraction—the Cross of Christ. His text was, '*I determine not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*' When he had closed his sermon, one

man, overwhelmingly impressed with the glorious truths to which he had listened, and the unction that attended them, rose and declared that he could set to his seal that the doctrine they had heard was the very truth, as it is in Jesus ; and though unworthy to mention a Saviour's name, or address them, he *knew* it was the truth, by blessed experience. The impression thus produced by the divine blessing, he followed up by expatiating, in the evening, on the inconceivable love of God to a perishing world. John iii : 16. A spirit of tenderness pervaded the assembly ; the penitent and the pious mingled their tears of sorrow and of joy.

While success so animating was afforded to his efforts ; while furnishing with arms, and leading to glorious war, the sacramental host of God's elect, his internal conflicts were severe, and admonished him of the necessity of being always clothed himself, in panoply divine. Humiliated by a sense of his unworthiness, and a vivid perception of his want of full conformity to the will and image of his Saviour, so far was he from being unduly elated by his prosperity in the work of the ministry, that he was at times tempted to abandon it altogether, feeling himself totally unfit to sustain the responsibilities, and discharge the functions, of an office so holy and momentous. But conscience would not permit him to draw back. 'Faint yet pursuing,' he continued to show and to teach publicly, and from house to house ; testifying to all, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wednesday, 29th, he writes thus : " Visited a sick woman—found she had a great stock of good deeds to build upon—endeavoured to convince her of the ne-

cessity of the new birth, and of justification by faith ; —but in vain. She gave me to understand I was not *her* minister ; and, therefore, she desired none of my advice. I proposed to pray with her, but she refused ; I entreated her to consider her state, and left her. O Lord pity her benighted soul !

“ Thursday, 30th.—Rode to Horton, and in the evening preached from a favourite text :—‘ Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.’ God enabled me to speak with freedom, fervency, and power. The word was sharp as a sword to wound, and powerful also to comfort. The shout of a king was heard in our camp. Many cried for mercy, while others shouted Hosannas to the Son of David. Blessed Lord, ride on, and spread the victory of thy cross !

“ June, 1st.—Returned to Cornwallis, and gave an exhortation in the school house. After the public meeting, one spoke sweetly and affectionately of what the Lord had done for her soul. I felt something of my Saviour’s love ; but O my Lord, *fill* my heart !

“ Sunday, 2d.—While I was preaching in the evening at the house of G. Sherman, Esq., and enforcing the important question—‘ What think ye of Christ ?’ some felt the arrows of conviction as they had never felt them before, and wept aloud, most of the time.

“ Monday, 3d.—Rode to Horton, and preached in the Baptist meeting house, on the Spouse coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her Beloved. Many were enabled to rejoice, while others mourned under a sense of their miseries. Went to Mr. Johnson’s. After supper I gave out a hymn, and engaged in prayer. Mrs. Johnson was so overpowered with the love of God that she could scarcely stand under it. She broke forth in raptures of praise, and declared, in language

I little expected from her, the wonderful goodness of God. She exhorted, with variety of expression, all present, to make their calling and election sure; and then, with inexpressible transport, cried out—‘ Oh ! that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest.’ Several present were deeply affected, and continued for two or three hours praising God, and imploring mercy.

“ Tuesday, 4th.—Preached at Falmouth, from the words—‘ Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.’ Many felt the power of the word. Several of Mr. Alline’s friends were present. They rejoiced greatly, declaring, it was the very Gospel which they had heard—the power of God unto salvation. ‘ Now,’ they testified, ‘ let them (true christians) come from parts ever so distant, the truth is the same. My soul bears witness, if you reject this gospel, you will be damned,’ &c. During my first visits, both here and elsewhere, they frequently spoke to this effect, but afterwards, when Mr. Alline returned from Cumberland, and they found that I had opposed his (peculiar) doctrines, as well as his design to set aside the Methodist discipline there, their course was changed. On my second coming, I was *no minister of Christ!*—soon after, *no christian!!* and a little after that, *a minister of Antichrist!!!* Yet I continued to act, live, and preach in precisely the same manner. Lord, what is man! And yet, many of these are, I really believe, alive to God.”—Such inconsistencies strike us with surprise, but they should produce in *our* minds, as they did in Mr. Black’s, not indignation, but regret. They are the natural results of the alli-

ance of ignorance, fanaticism, and an implicit submission to human authority, with a deep concern for the soul. By such admixtures, religion has often suffered degradation, its celestial features have been darkened and distorted, and its power to invigorate the intellect and enlarge the heart, completely neutralised. In minds of a superior order, the sublime faith of Christ has often been unhappily and unfairly confounded with the palpable imperfections in sentiment and spirit, of some of its weak and erring votaries—and the intellectual and moral grandeur of the Christian system, has in consequence been denied that homage from men which it receives from angels. The thought is appalling, because it involves the loss of an immortal nature. Did those gifted spirits, with a sincere desire to know the truth, occupy in its investigation a tithe of the time they devote to works of science or the productions of taste, matters of infinitely inferior, because of transient, interest; they would be at no loss to discriminate between the reveries of mistaken men, and the revelations of the only wise God. The dissipation from their minds of the wintry clouds of scepticism, would be merely among the preliminary benefits which they would derive from a course so truly rational; the radiance of truth would, by the divine blessing, beam into their hearts, and guide them into the way of peace, which they have not known. Then, too, they would probably imitate, as well as admire, the noble catholicity of spirit which Mr. Black displays, in conceding the claim of sincerity and genuine discipleship to those, whose conduct towards him, was certainly by no means ornamental to their Christian profession.

On Wednesday, 5th, Mr. Black reached Wind-

sor, and discoursed at the house of Mr. Scott, to an attentive audience, from 1 Tim. vi : 12, 'Fight the good fight of faith.' He remarks : " I had great liberty. The Lord enabled me to speak in a feeling and fervent manner. Many were in tears ; but there was not such a shaking among the dry bones as the night before.

" Thursday, 6th.—Visited Newport, and preached in the evening. Some, I believe, were profited ; but to myself it was a dry time. O my Lord, do thou quicken me, as thou art wont to do !

" Friday, 7th.—' Returned to Windsor, preached at Mr. Chandler's, and found a few in society,'—the first class, probably, that was formed in Windsor.

" Sunday, 9th.—Preached twice on 2. Cor. ii : 2, with peculiar pathos and earnestness. I spoke till I was almost exhausted. It was a moving time. O Lord set these mourners at liberty !

" Tuesday, 11th, and on the two following days, preached at Halifax to a stupid set of people. Few seemed to care about their souls. O what a town for wickedness is this. Satan has here many faithful and steady servants. And yet I cannot but hope to see a blessed work in this place. O Lord, lay to thy hand !

" Friday, 14th.—Accompanying a friend to breakfast, we witnessed a sad instance of the effects of sin. Some months previous, an unhappy creature was missing, and no one knew what had become of him. But this morning, he was found in a hay loft, having, as is supposed, hanged himself. The clothes had rotted from his back, the flesh from his bones, and one leg was parted from his knee. The spectacle suggested a train of serious reflections. ' Lord,' (said my musing mind) ' Lord, shall I soon be a breathless

corpse like this ? A spectacle that my nearest and dearest friend could scarcely bear the sight of ! Shall I too become food for worms ? Shall this blooming, active body, become an inanimate lump of matter ? Then let me not spend my precious time in vanity, in decorating or pampering this clay tenement. Rather let me apply my heart unto wisdom, and long and labour for the lovely adornings of my Saviour's life. Let that mind be in me which was also in Christ Jesus. From the case of this unhappy man, I see the effects of sin. I behold what I myself might have been, had not the Lord preserved me from self-destruction. O how deeply indebted am I to the grace of God ! Some are so wretched in their souls, so torn by conflicting passions, and disappointed in their pursuits of creature happiness, so ignorant of God and averse to him, so captivated by sin and actuated by the devil, that they madly rush out of a present hell, into one infinitely worse.' Blessed be God that it was not my own case ! Preached in the evening at Mr. Wells'. Many mocked most of the time, and kept up such a continual noise that few could hear what I said.

"Sunday, 16th.—Preached at Windsor, twice : the second time in Mr. Chandler's orchard, the house not being large enough to contain the people. In the evening was our first Love-Feast in Windsor. God was with us. Many wept and others rejoiced.

"Monday, 17th.—Preached at Falmouth, from James i : 23, 24, but felt great barrenness in my soul. O Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me ! Then shall I not be as a barren wilderness, but even as a fruitful field. I fear lest I should ever wander from thee ; or dishonour thy cause." He returned to Ha-

lifax on Thursday, and on the evening of the following day, preached again at Mr. Wells'. The conduct of some present, was extremely irreverent. While Mr. Black was citing the words of David, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth I desire beside thee,' he was interrupted by an impious man, in terms too revolting to be repeated. Emboldened by an example so worthy of imitation, a few individuals, glorying in their shame, attended the meeting the following night, prepared with gunpowder crackers, which they threw into the fire. The confusion produced by their explosion, ever and anon, was increased by their shouting, 'You'll not preach long—the press gang is coming.' Their opposition was impotent. For their rage and contumely, the preacher returned patience and pity. 'Father,' he prayed, 'forgive them, they know not what they do.' He had the pleasure of addressing, in the same place, on the Lord's day, a congregation whose decorous deportment and serious attention, afforded an animating presage of better days. He was still more encouraged by the indications of good, perceptible in a congregation to which he preached in the afternoon, at Fort Needham. "Who knows," he asks, "but some of these may retain their impressions, and bring forth fruit unto God?" Deriving encouragement from the manifestation of increasing attention to the word, he was instant in season and out of season. On Monday, 24th, he explained the nature, and enforced the absolute necessity of Christian discipleship, to an assemblage so numerous that they filled three apartments, and many were obliged to stand out of doors. The utmost decorum was observed by all during the service; although certain sons of Belial,

with fiend-like exultation, had shouted and hooted at him, as he was passing along the streets, to Mr. H. Ferguson's, at whose house the meeting was held.

Tuesday, 25th.—He had a long conversation with J—— R——, who, under the influence of despair, had more than once attempted to commit suicide. He thus relates the substance of it :—“ He told me, he could find no rest, day or night, and that he did not believe it possible for him to be saved. I asked him if he went to church, or any place of worship. He replied, ‘ No, ’ that he was too wicked—that he was possessed of an evil spirit, and had cursed the Scriptures in his heart. I asked ‘ Is it your *desire* to have such thoughts pass through your mind ? Do you approve of them ? ’ He said, ‘ No, but I am possessed. ’ I said, ‘ If you hate these thoughts, and cry to the Lord against them, he will deliver you. These are the suggestions of Satan, designed, no doubt, to keep you from the ordinances of God, and destroy your hopes of receiving any benefit from them. Thus you sink down into despair, and give up all pursuit of mercy. ’ I laboured hard to get him with me to preaching, but all to no purpose. He says he is miserable now, and must be forever—every thing he sees torments him. ” On this melancholy incident we may briefly remark, that the inefficacy of Mr. Black's endeavours to alleviate the depressive gloom that overhung the mind of this individual, may possibly have been owing to the fact that the causes of his mental agony were *physical*. That despair of the divine mercy may result purely from moral causes, is by no means incredible. It is, indeed, much more unaccountable that men, living in sin and professing to believe that the wrath of God abideth upon all who are not rege-

nerated, should not be tremblingly alive to their misery. Apathy, under such circumstances, is surely highly irrational. A vivid realization of their state would impel them either to seek refuge in the great propitiation, or involve them in despair. In the lives of the most obdurate and unthinking, there are, perhaps, moments when flashes of truth appal the conscience ;

“ And, though o’erwhelming to the dazzled brain,
These are the moments when the mind is sane.”

So unfailling, however, is the compassion that characterises the *mediatorial* providence under which redeemed man is placed, that the instances are of extremely infrequent occurrence, in which a concern for the soul is permitted to terminate in settled despondency. This deplorable state of mind, if traced to its source, will ordinarily be found to originate in mental disorganization, or in a morbid sensibility occasioned by the depressive influence of some bodily disease. Moral pravity may, in such cases, aggravate the malady ; but it is no matter of surprise if it does not yield to considerations, the force of which the mind is incapable of appreciating. Prayer is then our only resource. How inexpressible are our obligations to the providence and grace of God, for sustaining the vigour of our intellectual faculties, unimpaired, and providing for us a redemption so free and plenteous ! May gratitude prompt us cordially to embrace the latter, and to use the former to his glory !

Untiring in his efforts to do good, Mr. Black preached in the evening of the day on which the incident, just related, occurred, at the house of D. Ferguson. The blessed influence of his ministrations in Halifax became, on this occasion, more cheeringly apparent.

“Some,” he remarks, “seemed to have very serious impressions on their minds, and were distressed at the thoughts of my going away. Lord send them a faithful man, who may rightly divide the word of truth !

“Wednesday, 26th.—I rode to Windsor and preached. The voice of the Lord was heard in our camp. God is, I trust, shaking his future home. Several trembled—wept—and cried for mercy. It was about this time that B. Harris found peace—a blessed woman to this day.

“Saturday, 29th.—The arm of the Lord was made bare, while I preached at Horton, from John xviii : 40, —‘Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas.’ O what a meeting ! Strong were the consolations of God’s people, and affecting the cries of the mourners, who were convinced of sin.

“Sunday, 30th.—I preached at Cornwallis in the morning, on, ‘By grace are ye saved ;’ and in the afternoon, to the largest congregation I ever saw collected in any part of the country, or perhaps any body else, on ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives.’ Is. lxi : 1.”

The revival of the work of God which had, in many places, crowned Mr. Black’s labours, had now acquired pretty general notoriety ; and led to the expression of a desire, from various quarters, of a visit from him. The entreaties of several pious individuals, resident at Annapolis, were peculiarly importunate ; and he determined to embrace the earliest opportunity of complying with their application. Accordingly, on the 1st of July, early in the morning, he left Halifax for this purpose ; and spent the following

day at Granville, which he improved by preaching to the people twice,—“both,” he remarks, “powerful times.”

“Wednesday, 3d.—I crossed the river to the Annapolis side, and preached on ‘Noah only remained alive, and those that were with him in the ark.’—Lord, how is it that I feel so little of thy love? I had rather be mourning in deep distress, than remain in this cold state. I feel neither happy nor unhappy. O stir up all the powers of my soul! I esteem thee, precious, Lord; let me *feel* thee so.

“Thursday, 4th.—I preached near the town, on Zachæus, the publican. O how did sinners weep and cry! Our meeting continued for several hours before we could separate. Part of this day I experienced sweet comfort, but every now and then a wandering thought would crowd in, and spoil my joys.

“Saturday, 6th.—I preached with great freedom on Num. xix : 13. One woman cried aloud in sore distress. A few thought it their duty to spend the evening in prayer for her deliverance. We continued on our knees two hours and a half, when the Lord set her soul at liberty. Her husband, in deep distress, fell on the floor, and cried for mercy.

“Sunday, 7th.—I preached three times on Rev. iii : 20. God gave me much matter, and great liberty; and many felt the word. God is evidently at work here on many hearts. On Monday I preached at Granville, at six in the morning; at Wilmot, at ten; and at Bowens, at six, P. M. In the morning some, who had never manifested any concern for their souls before, were deeply affected; and appeared to be convinced. O that the impression may never wear off!

“Tuesday, 9th.—I rode on to Horton; and preached

in a large barn, on 'Who is on the Lord's side?' O what a meeting was this! Many trembled exceedingly; their knees smote one against the other. Among the rest was Matthew Ormsby, formerly a valiant servant of the devil, and confessedly as proud as Lucifer, now trembling every limb, while tears flowed plentifully from his eyes. Many now saw the necessity of *inward* religion; and with strong cries and tears besought the Lord for mercy. In the evening we had a watch-night. I preached on, 'What I say unto one, I say unto all, Watch.' Such a night as this I never saw before, unless at Mr. Oxley's, on my first setting out to seek the Lord. O what a noise and shaking among the dry bones. My voice could scarcely be heard. Joseph Johnson found this a time of love. The Lord passed by, and said unto his soul, Live! When the first meeting was concluded, my strength was almost exhausted; and I feared I should not be able to preach again. But the Lord literally fulfilled his promise, that they that wait on Him, shall renew their strength."

While Mr. Black was in labours so abundant to expand the sphere of his usefulness; while anxious to call sinners to repentance in places where his voice had not been previously heard, he was not forgetful of the interests of those societies which, under God, were the first fruits of his ministry. A prudent regard to their circumstances, rendered it expedient for him no longer to protract his stay from Cumberland. Nor was he fully aware, until he arrived there, of the necessity of his speedy return.—No one who has read the preceding pages will, it is apprehended, suspect their subject of that exclusive and churlish spirit, that could see nothing beyond his own enclosure but sterility.

He was, however, equally exempt from that laxity of sentiment which sometimes usurps the honours of Christian liberality, undistinguished alike by predilection or principle. Firmly attached to the doctrines taught by Wesley, because he conceived them to be in perfect unison with the inspired standard of truth and duty, and appreciating the admirable system of discipline which, in the singleness of his heart, that venerable man was led by providential circumstances to adopt, as eminently fitted to deepen, diffuse, and perpetuate the work of God, he conceived his usefulness to be intimately connected with the faithful inculcation of the one, and the mild, but uncompromising, enforcement of the other. We cannot, therefore, wonder at the poignancy of his feelings when, on reaching Amherst, he found the harmony of the Society there, on which he had bestowed so much labour, broken; and a large proportion of the members perverted and alienated, by the implicit admission of the dogmas of antinomian mysticism. Every one who has been similarly situated, must be aware how difficult it is to maintain the spirit of christian love unimpaired amidst such collisions; it is therefore peculiarly gratifying to meet, as in the following extract, with incidental evidence of his estimation of the piety of the person by whom this disastrous change had been caused, while he deprecates, in the most touching terms, the injury that had been done:—

“Sunday, 14th.—I preached twice at Amherst. I felt longing desires after holiness; but not that sweetness in Jesus that I sometimes experience. O for more love!—Since I left this Mr. Alline has paid a second visit—completed a separation—drawn about seventy of the members of society away from us—thrown all

into confusion—broken up the classes ; and introduced a flood of contention, the consequences of which I dread. This is peculiarly distressing to me. O Satan ! a wicked man could not have so well answered thy purpose. But may the Lord overrule it for good ; and prevent the mischief I dread ! Surely Mr. Alline stepped out of the way here. Better far that our pitiful *names* had been laid in the dust, than thus destroy the work of God, by setting brethren to strive with each other.” He felt the necessity of concentrating all his wisdom and energy in prayerful dependance upon God, to counteract the influences that were thus arrayed against his usefulness. His abandonment was not indeed complete. He could not yet say with the Apostle, when arraigned before the tribunal of Nero, ‘No man stood with me ; but all men forsook me.’ He had still the sympathy and co-operation of a goodly number, who were equally solicitous with himself to keep ‘the mystery of faith in a pure conscience,’ and to maintain among them the order of means which they had found so conducive to their spiritual growth and consolation. With the most influential of these he took an early opportunity of entering into consultation, respecting the best measures to be adopted, under existing circumstances, for promoting the work of God. They agreed that the classes should be immediately re-organized, and new leaders appointed by Mr. Black, in the place of those who had withdrawn from the society. Resolved, by the grace of God, to ‘keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,’ those who had not been shaken from their belief felt themselves now, more than ever, one in sentiment, in affection, in interest, and in purpose. The foundation thus laid for the permanent progression of the cause;

gained in *solidity* more than it lost in *breadth*. The continuance of persons in a religious society to which they are not attached from piety and principle, has often been productive of incalculable mischief—seldom, if ever, of benefit, either to themselves or others.—Having devoted a fortnight to the melioration, as far as practicable, of the state of things at Amherst, he hastened to respond to the cry, issuing from various other parts, ‘*Come over and help us!*’—in some of which the agencies of discord were exercising a baleful influence on the objects of his ministerial solicitude. Tantramar, Hillsborough, and the head of Petitcodiac river, were now in succession visited by him; in all which places, but more signally in the latter, the hand of the Lord was with him. When within a few miles of his father’s house, on his return, he received a letter from a friend at that place, informing him that his recent visit had been made a great blessing to the people, that the favourable opinion of many who had been prejudiced, was now conciliated, and that several were deeply awakened, and required immediate instruction and encouragement. This gladdening intelligence was accompanied by an urgent solicitation that he would, with as little delay as possible, pay them another visit. His previous plan was, to visit next in order the lower towns; but conceiving the contents of this letter entitled to serious consideration, he laid it before several in whose piety and judgment he had every confidence; and they were unanimously of opinion, that the indications of a providential call in the matter were clear and unequivocal. He accordingly lost no time in returning to Petitcodiac; nor had he reason to regret his toil; as his diary testifies:—

^a Thursday, 23d of August.—I went in a boat to

the head of the Petiscodiac river, and, after preaching twice, returned to the *village* at about one o'clock in the morning. Soon after we set off, we met a man with his wife and child in a canoe; he had rowed about twenty miles in order to get to meeting, but was too late. But, gracious Father! bless his soul. Let not his labour be in vain. About nine in the morning I preached at the *village*, and afterward met the society. Truly this was a powerful season. Old Mrs. Stieves, who had been in deep distress, was brought into glorious liberty. The Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and her mourning was turned into raptures of joy! She spoke of the goodness of God till all in the room were melted into tears. Mrs. Stieves was a person of excellent moral character, and had strictly attended to some of the outward duties of religion; but she now saw the necessity of inward holiness. When some of her sons were (previously) awakened, she opposed them, supposing they were led away by a deceiver. When — Baker, Esq. J. P., was up the river, she wrung her hands in great distress, and cried, O that Black! that Black! he has ruined my sons! He has ruined my sons! But the last time I was here, the Lord opened her understanding, and she saw her need of a deeper work. Sore distress, arising from conviction, seized upon her soul; and she had no rest until to-day.—Leaving many in tears, we set off with the tide about one o'clock, and arrived at Hillsborough in time for preaching. This was also a remarkable time. One was struck to the ground, and others wept bitterly.

“Sunday, 26th.—Having to cross the river at high water, which happened about twelve o'clock, I preached early in the morning. The power of the Lord

seemed to rest upon the congregation. Those who had sometime before, and they who had lately, experienced the goodness of God, were peculiarly refreshed; while those under awakenings were deeply concerned. At eleven I preached again. God was powerfully present as in the morning. Rejoicing and weeping were on every side. Under the last prayer, God set Frederick Stieves at liberty. Oh what a blessed time! Gladly would I remain longer here, were I not obliged to be at Fort Lawrence on Tuesday." On the day appointed he was at his post, and, after the public service, held a Love-feast. He thus delineates the state in which he found the people: "About fifty seemed desirous to continue in the Methodist connexion; nine or ten of whom had joined Mr. Alline, but now saw cause to return to the way in which God had first called them. These, together with those at Petitcodiac, made about eighty. Many stood aloof, and did not unite with either society, as formerly. Oh! what a deadly blow has the work in general, received from this melancholy division. However, our way is, with meekness and love to instruct those that oppose."

He now visited the lower towns, preaching at least once every week-day, in addition to his labours on the sabbath. Many of his country friends endeavoured, on this occasion, to dissuade him from going to Halifax, being apprehensive that, as the *press-law* was then in operation, he would be impressed into his Majesty's service. But his reply to them was in the true spirit of his office, as an ambassador for Christ:—"God is my keeper! I am his servant,—engaged in his work; of whom, then, shall I be afraid?" Grateful to his friends for the kind solicitude they evinced for his safety, he, nevertheless, acted in accordance

with his conceptions of duty. And not only was he permitted to prosecute his work without molestation, but had the happiness to find that two individuals, who had been awakened during his previous visit, were now partakers of justifying faith in the Son of God.

On Sunday, 30th September, he delivered a discourse at Windsor, which was attended with gracious influence, more than usually rich and powerful, even in the history of *his* ministrations, from Deut. xxxii : 13,— ‘He made him to suck honey out of the rock.’ Anxious to be able to recur at pleasure to the precious and consoling truths with which this sermon was replete, several who heard it, earnestly requested its publication; and Mr. Black, though conscious of its imperfections, yielded to their importunity. A copy of the sermon once fell into the hands of the compiler of this volume. In a literary point of view, its pretensions are humble; nor does its matter, by any means, convey a just idea of the accurate and extensive acquaintance with Christian theology, which Mr. Black subsequently attained: it is, however, interesting, as a specimen of his manner of preaching in the incipient years of his ministry, and particularly of the tenderness and unction with which he was wont to expatiate on the goodness of God, and the blessedness of his people. This is the only sermon to which he could ever be induced to give publicity. As an instance of the humiliating opinion which he entertained of his best pulpit performances, we may here mention the respectful decision with which he declined to publish his sermon on the death of Bishop Asbury, preached in Baltimore, at the request of his American brethren, at their first General Conference after the decease of that venerable and laborious servant of Christ; notwithstanding their assu-

rances of the profit and admiration with which they had listened to it, and of their earnest desire to see it in print.

Nothing of very prominent interest is recorded in his journal, as having occurred for a few weeks subsequent to this time, save the evidences afforded by every page, of his unabated ardour and self-denying exertions for the good of immortal souls, and of the effusion of that divine influence on the minds of his hearers, by which he had been hitherto so abundantly encouraged. Annapolis, indeed, remained in this respect a melancholy exception. Such was the insensibility of the people there, that his clearest expositions of the nature of vital christianity, and his most pungent appeals to the conscience, appeared to recoil as from hearts of marble.

In common with all who have been eminently successful in accomplishing the high and holy objects of the Christian ministry, Mr. Black preached, "not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth the hearts." By this principle he was guided in the selection of his subjects, and in the mode of presenting them. With Luther, he estimated justification by faith alone as the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*, the doctrine with which the church must stand or fall; and, with a greater than Luther, he thundered in the ear of the self-righteous formalist, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."—A just and adequate conception of these momentous truths, cannot exist, apart from sound and scriptural convictions of the total depravity in which the apostacy of our first parents involved the whole species. This is in fact the basis of the central truth of the Bible,—THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, of which it is impossible to

perceive either the grandeur or the necessity, without fully admitting the melancholy deposition of the Holy Spirit against the heart of man,—that it is “deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.” Constantly to hold this first principle of the oracles of God in prominence before his hearers, is, therefore, a part of a minister’s duty so momentous, that, if he either shade or soften this truth, he cannot acquit himself of the imputation of handling the word of God deceitfully. It is, indeed, with extreme difficulty that mankind are brought to acquiesce in such humiliating representations of their native depravity. But still more strange and lamentable is the fact, that some of those who are “set for the *defence* of the Gospel,” instead of labouring to fasten the charge of apostacy from God upon the consciences of their unconverted hearers, can prophesy smooth things to them, and talk eloquently of the dignity and virtuous principles of fallen human nature.

“From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,
Preserve the church !”

With a minister who entertained these views, Mr. Black was, about this time, drawn into an animated debate. Whether the collision was purely accidental, or sought for by the reverend defender of man’s native purity, we are not informed. Mr. Black’s reminiscences of the dialogue, as recorded by his own pen, are, in substance, as follows :—“I had a long argument with the Rev. Mr. Bencraft, at Horton, on the total corruption of the human heart, which he denied ; strenuously maintaining that when born into the world, our minds resembled a sheet of white paper.*

* The following remarks of an excellent writer, upon this si-

I said 'the Apostle pictures human nature in a very different manner, where he represents the wisdom of depraved man, as 'earthly, sensual, and devilish;' and where he avers that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,'—with many testimonies of a similar import. He remarked, 'You take only a passage here and there, which you wrest from its proper meaning. I replied, as John Nelson on another occasion, 'I leave you all the rest to refute me with. But if you will only take a view of what the Scriptures teach on the subject, and stand open to conviction, you will soon discover that every power of the soul is corrupted; and that sin has reigned, not merely over the whole man, but also over the whole of mankind. He said, 'I do not deny that there are many men corrupted by the influence of evil example. But it by

miltade, are equally just and ingenious. "In combating the doctrine of innate ideas, Mr. Locke, following Aristotle, has compared the human mind to a sheet of white paper, on which characters of different descriptions may subsequently be written. By those philosophers who deny the innate depravity of human nature, the comparison has frequently been applied to the human mind in regard to its moral state, its dispositions, and tendencies. It will be a juster comparison, if, in this respect, we liken the mind to a sheet of paper on which have been written characters in SYMPATHETIC INK, which are not discernable by the eye, till, by approximation to the fire, or by some appropriate chemical applications, they are brought out into legible distinctness. So it is with the principles of evil in infancy,—we may not for a time be sensible of their presence; and may be delighted with the smiling harmlessness of the little babe—but the principles are there; and require only the influence of circumstances to bring them into practical and visible manifestations, which, to the eye of even a superficial observer, commences at a very early period."

Wardlaw's Christian Ethics, p. 95. London Ed.

no means follows, that they were, therefore, depraved from their birth, that they brought a totally corrupt nature into the world with them. I replied, 'It is written of Adam after his apostacy, by which he lost *the image of God*, that he begat a son (not in God's, but) in *his own* likeness, that is, corrupt like himself. And this corruption growing with his growth, hurried him on to commit murder. Moses says, 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;' that the earth was corrupt before God and filled with violence; for all flesh had corrupted his way. 'Those texts,' said he, 'prove nothing more than that the people of that age were extremely degenerate.' I answered, 'This total depravity is not confined to any particular period, but manifests itself in all ages of the world, until grace renews the heart. David tells us, 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.' And what was the result of the divine inspection? 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good; no, not one.' He further says of himself, that he was 'shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him.' '*All we*,' says the Apostle, 'like sheep have gone astray.' After having confirmed this melancholy doctrine, from the prophets, our Lord and his Apostles, I asked him for a proof to the contrary. He adduced the case of the young man in the Gospel, who came to our Lord and enquired, What good thing he must do in order to inherit eternal life; and who, when referred by our Redeemer to the commandments, replied, 'All these have I kept *from my youth*

up.' 'Then,' it is added by St. Mark, 'Jesus, beholding him, *loved* him.' I observed, 'there is a love of *pity*, which God exercises towards all mankind, and particularly to those who, like that young man, for one sordid lust sell their souls, and are yet filled with sorrow when they find they must abandon all their pharasaic hopes of heaven. And there is a love of *complacency* with which He regards none but his adopted children. Jesus beheld this hopeful youth with tender commiseration; but the love of the world was predominant in his heart, a melancholy proof of my doctrine. He loved his possessions too well, to embrace the Saviour's doctrines; therefore, Jesus could not delight in him. But permit me, Sir, to ask you the following questions:—1. Do you really think, Sir, that the young man spoke the truth, or entertained a proper estimate of his obedience to the law of God, when he said, '*All these have I kept from my youth up?*' *Ans.* 'To be sure I do.' 2. 'Do you think that our Lord gave him a perfect rule of conduct when he presented to him the divine law?' *Ans.* 'Certainly I do.' 3. 'Do you conceive that Jesus meant him to understand that unsinning obedience to the law of God is the condition of justification?' *Ans.* 'Most assuredly I do. Our Lord had no design to mock him.' 'That our Lord did not intend to mock him I readily grant; but that your conceptions of the matter are erroneous, is plain. For, in the *first* place, it is contrary to the explicit declaration of scripture to say that we are justified by the deeds of the law, which we have violated a thousand times. By the law, is the knowledge of sin; but not of deliverance from it. And of this, it is probable, our Lord designed to convince him, by referring him to the law. And, *secondly*,

you contradict yourself and the Saviour too, in affirming that he yielded perfect obedience to the requisitions of the law, and yet it is undeniable that he lacked one thing. This, Sir, appears to me, strange reasoning.' 'However,' he rejoined, 'the case of the little children brought to our Lord establishes my position; for He declares, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' These were doubtless clean.' 'Not by nature, Sir, for the words of David, already quoted, show that we are born in sin and shapen in iniquity. And hence that question, Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' He seemed very much fettered; and said with considerable warmth—'I will talk with no such ignorant fellows.' I entreated him to get his soul converted to God, or he could never enter the kingdom of heaven; and so left him."

The doctrine in defence of which the subject of our narrative thus successfully wielded the sword of the Spirit, has always been regarded by orthodox Christians as a primary article of the Gospel system. In respect to the precise nature of this original taint which pervades all man's moral powers and affections, various opinions have indeed been entertained; but as to the fact itself, the explicit information of the Bible leaves no room for diversity of sentiment among those who have learned unreservedly to subject their erring opinions to its decisions. Unaided reason, although incapable of shedding a solitary ray on the origin of this strange and universal disorder of the moral system, could not but see and lament its existence. "No one," says Horace, "is born without vicious propensities; and he is the best man who is troubled with the least."

Nam vitis nemo sine nascitur; optimus ille est
Qui minimis urgetur.

To argue against this doctrine *à priori*; to maintain that it is incompatible with just views of the divine character; to assert in the face of the plainest evidence, that it involves a charge of malevolence and injustice against the Supreme Being, in his moral government of mankind, is obviously, to assume the principle that our capacities and feelings are competent to measure the perfections of the Infinite, and to anticipate in what manner those perfections will be developed. The Scriptures reveal the moral perfection of the Deity in all that overwhelming purity and grandeur before which seraphs veil their faces; yet on their pages is written as with a sunbeam, the doctrine of man's native and total depravity. If our incapacity to conciliate these truths, revealed with equal clearness, constitutes a just ground of the negation of either, the authority of the Bible ceases the moment it contradicts our previous conceptions of truth. This is the modest position practically assumed by all, whether Socinians or Pelagians, who make their appeal from the explicit enunciations of the sacred volume, to their own apprehensions of the divine character. I cannot dismiss this topic, eminently important and practical as it is, without earnestly beseeching the reader, if he has not already done so, deeply to lay it to heart. It is no subject of speculation. Man's soul, once the temple of the Divine Spirit, now lies in ruins; and none but he who made it can repair it. "That he hath withdrawn himself, and left his temple desolate," says the incomparable Howe, "we have many plain and sad proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front,

yet extant, this doleful inscription, Here God once dwelt. Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man, to show the divine presence did once reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity, to proclaim, he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct; the altar overturned. The light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, and the other burn with so pious fervour. The golden candlestick is displaced and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the Prince of darkness. The sacred incense which sent rolling up in clouds, its rich perfumes, is exchanged for a poisonous hellish vapour." May this description, as just as it is appalling, excite us to fly by faith to Him of whom it is written, 'He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory.'

A few extracts from Mr. Black's Journal will close the present chapter and year.

"Sunday, 17th November.—When I take a view of my former experience, and compare it with the present state of my mind, with shame I may confess—My zeal for the conversion of souls is not so flaming, nor my comforts and joys from God, so abiding, nor my desires after holiness so vehement. Oh my God! stir me up to love thee with all my heart. Destroy, O! destroy all sin in me—perfect my heart in love—I long to be holy.

"Wednesday, 20th.—I rode over to Tantramar, where I was sorry to find mysticism and antinomianism spreading like fire; and their deadly effects already manifest.—The people are informed publicly that they have nothing to do with the law of God—that David was a man after God's own heart when wallow-

ing in adultery and murder—that it was only his body that sinned, that his soul never sinned at all. O Lord, suffer not the enemy of souls thus to deceive them!

“Friday, 22d.—I preached at Hillsborough from ‘My sheep hear my voice,’ &c., from which I endeavoured to show the true and scriptural character of the *perseverance of the saints*. In the night a number of plunderers came to Mrs. Stieves’ and demanded something to eat, and remained till morning. They were from Machias, and are a set of wretches who cloak their villany by the agitations of the times; and would nearly as soon have robbed a friend of Congress as a friend of the British Government. Having appointed to preach at eight o’clock the following morning, I invited them to accompany me; and they all came except their Captain. I discoursed concerning Zaccheus the publican; and some even of *them* shed tears. I went, took them by the hand, and entreated them to turn to God, or they must inevitably perish. They received the admonition kindly; and I believe their consciences told them the same. They detained us from going up the river for about two hours and a half, when the tide was so far spent that we could not go. This they did with the design to prevent us from informing the people of their coming.

“Sunday, 24th.—We left the Point in the morning about one A. M., intending to get before the plunderers, but being in a whale-boat, and we having only a canoe, they had the advantage and easily passed us in the river. At the village we fell in with them again. I now spoke my mind to them more fully, showing them that they could not escape the damnation of hell unless a speedy repentance should prevent. They were dumb; and soon after went to a neighbouring house,

saying they would go twenty miles to get clear of that d—d preacher. They killed an ox and a sheep, plundered the mill of all the flour they could find, and left some families almost destitute of clothes and bedding. Yet they attempted to take neither my clothes, nor watch, nor any thing belonging to me.

“Thursday, 23th.—I preached twice at Hillsborough. Some were deeply affected. But I did not feel my soul alive to God, as I desired. O Lord ! what is the cause of this strangeness between my soul and Thee ? Why should I love Thee ; and not Thee alone ? Lord, whom have I in heaven but Thee ! and there is none in all the earth that I desire beside Thee ! I long

“ Of naught to speak or think beside,
My Lord, my Love, is crucified ! ”

CHAPTER V.

THE MINISTER'S CHIEF JOY—INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION RATIONAL AND SCRIPTURAL—MR. BLACK'S REFLECTIONS IN COMMENCING A NEW YEAR—REMARKABLE CASE OF CONVERSION—MR. BLACK'S INTENTION TO GO TO KINGSWOOD SCHOOL—A LETTER FROM THE REV. MR. WESLEY—DEMONIACAL AGENCY—CONVERSATION ON THE LORD'S SUPPER—PROSPERITY OF THE WORK OF GOD AT LIVERPOOL—OPPOSITION OF PROFANE OFFICERS AT SHELBURNE—LETTER TO MR. ALLINE—INTERESTING LETTER FROM MR. WESLEY—ANOTHER—DISPLAYS OF THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF GOD—VISIT TO P. E. ISLAND—MR. BLACK'S MARRIAGE—MRS. BLACK'S ESTIMABLE CHARACTER.

THERE are few pleasures that solace the mind, or remunerate the toils of a devoted minister of the Lord Jesus, comparable to the pure and celestial exhilaration he experiences when his efforts to win souls are crowned with conspicuous success. His joy is then the joy of angels.—Those benignant spirits bend from their elevated seats to mark the first movements of the repentant sinner towards God ; and acquire, we are told by the Saviour, an accession of felicity from the interesting spectacle. With what rapture then must the immediate instrument of such blessed transformations survey them ! They are divine seals affixed to his office—the travail of his Redeemer's soul—trophies of

victorious grace ; and his bosom glows with transport while he anticipates the day when the dignity will be conferred upon him of presenting them stainless before the throne of God and the Lamb. An eminent degree of that dignity awaits the messenger of the churches whose course we are endeavouring to trace. The details exhibited in the preceding pages afford luminous proof that he did not run in vain, neither labour in vain ; and the materials of an ampler attestation of this delightful fact are yet in reserve. One observable feature of the conversions that took place under Mr. Black's ministry cannot have escaped the reader—I refer to their *suddenness*.

The inadequate and erroneous conceptions that prevail on this subject among certain classes of professing Christians, render it expedient to endeavour the removal of their prejudices. It may be spontaneously admitted that *time* and *place* are merely circumstances of conversion ; and that though a reference to them can hardly fail to be both animating and salutary to the real believer's mind—a distinct recollection of them is not essential in order to evince the genuineness of a work of divine grace. Certain it is, however, that there must be a special time when conversion takes place. And from the magnitude of the change, involving as it does our most solemn relations to the Deity, and the infusion of the elements of a new and divine nature into the soul, one would be very naturally led to conceive, anterior to the examination of any direct evidence upon the subject, that no one could receive a blessing so heart-stirring without having a vivid perception of it. An event so momentous can hardly be thought to take place *unconsciously*.—It is worthy of remark, that the numerous cases of conversion record-

ed in the New Testament, were almost without exception, sudden. It therefore behoves those who deny that the Holy Spirit operates in the same manner *now*, to establish their negation by unexceptionable evidence. The appeal must be made to well attested facts. Now it is matter of notoriety that the pages of religious biography supply innumerable instances in which the *evidence* was coeval with the *act* of justification. Whoever in the face of such an accumulation of facts is capable of denying the doctrine of instantaneous conversion, has only to follow out his own principle to be landed in universal scepticism, as well in philosophy as in religion. With far different views and emotions, the humble believer—who remembers, and never can forget, the rock whence he was hewn, and the pit out of which he was taken, will—accompany us in our narrative.

Entering upon a new year, Mr. Black mourns over the little progress he apprehended himself to have made in the divine life, during the preceding twelve months. The language of self-crimination is no certain indication of a low state of spiritual attainment; and even when it correctly displays the interior of the heart it affords a pleasing presage of future amelioration. Earth is ungenial to the celestial plant of grace. Constant effort is required to keep the heart right with God—effort that can be sustained only by the invigorating influences of the Holy Spirit. This consideration does not indeed extenuate the moral delinquency of backsliding in heart; but it diminishes our surprise at such an occurrence, however lamentable. And with what animated gratitude should we remember, that though we may be painfully conscious of unfaithfulness to the grace of God, the merciful provisions of his covenant

forbid us to despond ; the blood of sprinkling still pleads for us ; the aspects of the throne of propitiation brighten with encouragement ; we may approach boldly, obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Attracted by these views of the pitifulness of the divine mercy, Mr. Black, while, on comparing his present experience with what it was a year from this time, he writes bitter things against himself ; complaining that neither was his faith so strong, nor his zeal so great, nor his love so glowing, nor his enjoyment of the divine presence so sensible as it had been in the commencement of the previous year, he earnestly renews his application to the fountain of salvation, and groans for redemption from inbred sin. A token for good could not fail to follow such profound self-abasement and its constant accompaniment—fervent prayer.

Tuesday, 8th of January, 1783, he writes ;—“ I felt more of the Redeemer’s love this morning, than I have for some time past ; and it continued most of the day,

‘ The opening Heavens around me shine,
With beams of sacred bliss,
If Jesus shows his mercy mine,
And whispers I am his.’

I also experienced much comfort to-day in conversing with John Johnson. I believe he is truly alive to God ; an Israelite indeed. My mind is much exercised respecting the spread of false doctrines. O that I had the power of convincing speech ! Lord, many who have received them are *thy people*. O that I might lead them into the paths from which they have strayed. O give me acceptable words, that I may not shock their prejudices, but inform their judgments. Thou art my shepherd ! lead them and me into green pastures.”

The opponents of true godliness are not all as heroic

as they seem. To acquire the reputation of fearful consistency, or the praise of facetiousness, they not unfrequently array themselves as decidedly against their own convictions, as they do against the cause of righteousness; and eagerly avail themselves of the lowest gibe, or the merest artifice of simulation,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame.

Happy is it for them, when these struggles gain the ascendancy,—when conscience, assuming the majesty of her delegated powers, arrests and arraigns the impious culprit, and compels him to answer to her appalling indictment. But happier still, if pleading guilty to the charge and “shut up unto the faith,” they fall prostrate before the throne of the heavenly grace, and bend the pride of reason to the humiliating terms of acceptance before God. We have recorded on a preceding page the contumelious treatment Mr. Black received from a certain gentleman, named D—r, for no other reason but because he admonished him, with affectionate fidelity, in a company which he was emulous to amuse with his impious levity. But we have now the pleasure to present him to the reader, sitting at the feet of Jesus, and clothed in his right mind.

“Wednesday 29th.—I returned from Tantramar in company with three individuals, one of whom was F. D. The word of the Lord smote his heart on Monday, and he is now in great anguish of mind. When at Mr. Fawkinder’s, I saw him walking about the barn, and went to him. He entreated me to pardon the insults he had offered to me at Mr. Morse’s, upwards of two years previous, and begged that I would

pray with him. I did. He roared in the agony of his soul."

From the period that Mr. Black began to preach, he felt the inconvenience of not having brought to the work those superior literary acquirements, and habits of intellectual discipline which, in union with true piety, are alike useful and ornamental to a minister of Christ. Prompted by a sense of his deficiency in this respect, and by an ardent thirst for mental improvement, he for some time entertained the idea of spending a year or two at the school which the Rev. John Wesley had founded at Kingswood for the education of the Preachers' sons. Accordingly, towards the close of the preceding year, he wrote Mr. Wesley on the subject, earnestly requesting him at the same time, to send Missionaries to Nova Scotia. The apparent abruptness, with which Mr. Wesley (in the commencement of his reply, which we subjoin) answers an inquiry proposed by Mr. Black, is quite characteristic of the admirable man who, on being asked how he accomplished so much, said, 'I am always in haste, but never in a *hurry*.'

Semper ad eventum festinat, et in medias res,
Non secus ac notas, auditorem rapit.—HORACE.*

“LONDON, Feb. 26, 1783.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I did indeed very strongly expostulate with the Bishop of London, concerning his refusing to ordain a pious man, although he had not learning, while he ordained others that to my knowledge, had no piety, and but a moderate share of learning. I incline to think

* He always hastens to the event; and hurries away his reader into interesting circumstances, as if they were already known.

that letter will appear in public some time hence. Our next Conference will begin in July ; and I have great hopes we shall be then able to send you assistance. One of our preachers informs me he is willing to go to any part of Africa or America. He does not regard danger or toil : nor indeed does he count his life dear unto himself, so that he may testify the gospel of the grace of God, and win sinners to Christ. But I cannot advise any person to go alone. Our Lord sent his disciples two and two. And I do not despair of finding another young man, as much devoted to God as he.

“The antinomian you mention ought to be guarded against, with all possible diligence ; otherwise he will do more hurt in one year than he can do good in twenty. And it is well if he that calls himself Lady Huntingdon’s Preacher, does not do as much hurt as he. Of Calvinism, Mysticism, and Antinomianism, have a care ; for they are the bane of true religion ; and one or other of them, has been the grand hindrance of the work of God, wherever it has broke out. If you come over to England, we shall make room for you at Kingswood. Peace be with all your spirits.

“I am, my dear Brother,

“Your affectionate Brother,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

The person whom Mr. Wesley designates an antinomian was Mr. Alline ; and there is reason to fear that the prophetic allusion to the unhallowed tendency of the principles he disseminated has been verified by the event. In this day of evangelical enterprise and achievement, when the undecaying tree, planted by Wesley himself, is rapidly expanding its branches and scattering its healing leaves in all the different quarters

of the globe ; when hundreds of missionaries are already in the field, and hundreds more only await the openings of providence to follow in their train ; it is truly heart-stirring to reflect, that only half a century ago, even Mr. Wesley deemed it a proof of extraordinary piety and zeal in any young man, to be willing to carry the gospel message to foreign lands.

A scene took place about this time at the house of Mr. Donkin, which to us appears susceptible of explanation only on the principle of demoniacal influence ; but of which we shall leave the reader to form his own judgment, after furnishing the facts of the case in Mr. Black's own words, and his brief reflections upon them.

“Feburary 18th.—While I was at Mr. Donkin's, young Sherman came in, and began to talk in a very unscriptural manner about being led by the Spirit. A friend who was present kindly cautioned him ; but it was to no purpose. Like other enthusiasts he was above being taught. He affirmed that he spoke by the Spirit of the eternal God, and that she was persecuting that Spirit. She told him it was far from her design or desire to persecute any one, but she feared some were led by another spirit ; and that the word of God was the rule by which we ought to try the spirits. After they had conversed for some time, I related the case of George Bell, in England, as it is described in Mr. Wesley's Journal ; and also that of another person of whom I had heard. It struck him. He threw himself on the floor and cried aloud,—‘ I am undone ! I am undone !’ I said ‘ No ! there is no need for this. Only seek the Lord, and abide by his word. He is still able and willing to save.’ He sat down on a bench, grinning and gnashing his teeth. It appeared

evident to me, that he was under the influence of an evil spirit. I fell on my knees by his side, and began to pray. Immediately, as if possessed by all the furies of the pit, he jumped from his seat—raised his hands, and began to scratch me down the back, as if he would have torn off my coat. Mrs. D. was greatly alarmed, caught her infant in her arms, and ran screaming out of the house, leaving him, and me, alone.—He would sometimes bark like a dog, and at others, jump, stamp, and make hideous noises; imitating the Indians when they invoke the infernal powers; this he did all round the room. Anon, he would shout, mingling with his screams terms of the most bitter disdain and execrable blasphemy against Jesus Christ. I found his design was, if possible, to stop my praying; thinking he would then have power to seize me. But I was peculiarly assisted to wrestle with the Lord; and I continued praying until he became as quiet as a lamb, knelt by my side, and began to pray. I then stopped. He afterwards told me, that his wish was to have torn out my eyes, or to have killed me, but that after he had proceeded a certain length, there was nothing more that he had power to do.—Hence we may learn, 1st. The devil's malice, 2d. The prevalence of prayer, and 3d. The value and necessity of the Bible.

“Friday, 21st.—I visited one of the soldiers in the garrison, whom God has lately awakened. He calls night and day for mercy. I pointed him to ‘the Crucified;’ and earnestly exhorted him never to rest till the anger of the Lord was turned away. He is in the midst of devouring lions, who use the most horrid imprecations while he is praying. The devil is alarmed for his kingdom, lest his subjects should desert his standard. The Commandant is greatly exasperated, and

swears 'Not one of the Methodists shall go near him ; for they are going to the devil with their religion.' While I was in the hospital I talked to several, enforcing the necessity of conversion. Some assented to the truth of what I said ; but others derided me. Surely this place is another Sodom.

" March 9th.—While I was preaching at the Dutch settlement, one or two fell down, wringing their hands, and apparently in deep distress. As soon as I closed my sermon, one came up to me, and charged me with having preached false doctrine. I asked, wherein ? He said, 'In asserting that the sacraments are nothing.' I replied, 'I believe them to be ordinances of God, and therefore neither to be despised nor neglected ; still, though you were to receive them a thousand times, if you die without being born again, you can never see the kingdom of God. They are means of grace, and ought to be used with reference to this end. We must not build on *them*, but on *Christ*, the sure foundation.' He maintained that we *ought* to build on them, because Christ has said, 'He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.' I explained the terms as describing those who live by faith on the Son of God ; and intimated that as many who eat the bread and drink the wine in the sacrament, go to hell after all, it is plain those words of our Saviour cannot be understood of merely receiving the outward elements. He accused me of undervaluing the sacraments now, and said, he thought it likely we would, by and by, throw them aside altogether. I assured him, the conclusion was not the offspring of our doctrine, but of his own groundless fears.

" Thursday, 22d of May, I set sail from Halifax for LaHave, and arrived the following day in time to get

the people together for meeting. I preached from, 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?' After having preached ten times to them, many of them accompanied me to the shore, where we had an affecting parting. I trust not a few of them will have cause to bless God for my coming. Some at least seemed determined to seek God as the centre and source of happiness. I sailed for Liverpool, where we arrived about four o'clock in the afternoon, and a little after seven we had about three hundred to hear.

"Friday 30th.—I preached at the Falls from, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?' God was amongst us, some were affected to tears; and one cried aloud for mercy. In the forenoon of the following day I had to lament many wanderings, even when engaged in prayer; but in the after part of the day I was sweetly refreshed. I preached in the meeting house in the evening. Several here are waiting for the consolation of Israel.

"Sunday, June 1st.—The Rev. Mr. Frazer preached in the meeting house twice, and I once. At noon a multitude of persons followed me to Mr. Smith's; the house was pretty well filled, and the Lord was in the midst of us. Many were deeply convinced of sin, and many were exceedingly happy, praising the Lord.—On Monday I preached on the east side of the river; and oh! what a meeting. The power of the Lord was eminently present. God is known in Salem; his name is great in Israel. I think there were about fourteen crying out in great anguish of soul; while others were shouting for joy. Such affecting heart-piercing cries as were uttered by one, my ears never heard. 'Oh!' she vehemently cried, 'oh! what shall

I do to be saved? O my Jesus! My Jesus! What shall I do—what shall I do to be saved?” and she continued thus for the space of two hours.—In the evening I preached at the meeting house; this also was a solemn time. After the meeting, some wanted me to go this way, and some that; their entreaties were so importunate, and yet so opposite, that I was involved in much perplexity. I concluded to go over the river to brother Dean’s. We kneeled on the shore, prayed and parted with those who could not accompany us. Those who conveniently could, went over the river with us, to whom I proposed that we should spend part of the night in prayer. The power of God descended upon the people; cries, groans, or rejoicing were on every hand. Thus it continued till about one o’clock in the morning, soon after which we retired.

“Tuesday 3d.—I expected to have left for Shelburne this morning, but was unavoidably detained. I crossed the river to Mr. Smith’s; presently a number of people assembled, and the power of God was manifested on this occasion also. I preached in the evening at the Falls; and God sent his word to the hearts of those present. One gentleman from Stratford, in Connecticut, was powerfully awakened. Oh! with what earnestness did he plead for mercy for two or three hours, with little or no intermission. Blessed be God, these are reviving days to me. O! glory be to God in the highest!” The next day Mr. Black received the following note from the individual to whom he refers in the preceding extract.—“Edmund Darrow, a stranger to a saving interest in Christ, begs an interest in your prayers to Almighty God, for the deliverance of his soul; and should Mr. Black visit New England, I should be glad to wait upon him at my house, western

part of Connecticut." In connection with this expression of his feelings, Mr. Black inserts in his Journal a notice of his death, which took place under painful circumstances. Soon after he was convinced of sin, it appears he obtained the blessing of peace with God, and zealously exhorted all to make their calling and election sure. He was drowned the following year in the attempt to enter Liverpool (N. S.) harbour in a storm.

"Thursday 5th.—I sailed for Shelburne, where we found ourselves in safety the next day. Our hearts were gladdened by the sight of some of our friends from York, just set down in the midst of these barren woods, with not a single house in the town. It rained profusely all night. Brother Barry, in whose tent I stopped, sat up all night, and insisted that I should lie down.

"Sunday 8th.—We put up notices on some of the tents, announcing preaching for eleven o'clock, three in the afternoon, and six in the evening. On Monday I preached again. While I was praying, a person came up in the garb of a gentleman, cursing and swearing that what I said was a d—d lie; and threatening if I did not cease to knock me down. He demanded, 'By what authority do *you* preach?' and addressing the audience, added, 'he is an impostor, he has no authority to preach.' I said, surely Sir, I have as much authority to preach, as you have to swear, and sport with the tremendous name of the great Judge, who will by no means hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.—He went away, and in a short time returned with two servants of the devil, more sturdy than himself. They came on like the mad bulls of Bashan; their mouths were full of blasphemies and

awful imprecations. Their object was to tear me down, but the people would not suffer them to touch me. One of them, swearing he could preach as well as I, mounted the stump of a tree, and poured forth a flood of oaths. I thus accosted him ; ‘ Friend, I wish you well ; my soul pities you ; you know you are fighting against God ; your own conscience condemns you. But remember, you and I must shortly stand at the bar of God. And how, oh how will you meet me there ?’ He seemed impressed for a moment ; and then hardening his heart, he uttered a few more oaths, and with his colleagues went off and left me to finish my discourse without any further trouble. During the sermon, one man from the skirts of the congregation, threw a stone at me with great force, which had it struck me, would probably have carried death with it. But as I saw it, I was enabled to elude it, and it passed me with great violence but without injury. Blessed be God for his mercy ! The disturbance only had the effect of bringing more to hear, several of whom appeared concerned for their souls.

“ Saturday 21st.—I preached twice at Liverpool, both seasons of comfort ; and spent the evening with a few friends at Mr. Smith’s in religious exercises. Among those who were much affected on the occasion, one young woman was very happy. She praised God in a wonderful manner, and exhorted all around to seek an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.—Part of this day I could rejoice in the Lord, and during the whole of it, I longed to be unreservedly consecrated to his glory. Yet I did not experience such sweet sensations of divine love as I have in some past periods enjoyed, and long again to feel. O my Lord, give me to love thee alone ! Take away every rival.

“Let me spend my latest breath in proclaiming thy love. Gladly would I die as soon as my last message is delivered. Death is no terror to me ; it appears infinitely desirable when I feel thy love.” This visit to Liverpool lived in Mr. Black’s memory as one of the most pleasing reminiscences of his useful career. The few days he remained in that place were full of labour and full of consolation. Many were aroused to serious concern for their souls, and a goodly number found peace with God. Thence he repaired to Halifax, and after preaching a few times there, went to Windsor on the 1st of July.

We have already had repeated occasion to observe the deep and affectionate solicitude felt by Mr. Black to maintain if possible a friendly intercourse with Mr. Aline, from a persuasion that with all that was exceptionable in his doctrinal views, there was associated sincere love to the Saviour, and an ardent zeal for the extension of his kingdom. This solicitude was increased on learning that Mr. Aline was seriously ill ; and he was not without hope that under such circumstances, the expression of the sentiments of his heart, by eliciting a reciprocation of Christian love, would lead to a favorable result. With this object and anticipation he addressed to him the following letter.

“WINDSOR, July 4th, 1783.

“DEAR BROTHER,

“I hear you are very ill in body, but I trust happy in soul, rejoicing in the sweet Lord Jesus. Since I saw you I have been at Liverpool, proclaiming the love of Christ to lost sinners ; and blessed be God we have had happy and delightful days. On my first arrival they appeared dull, having been without preach-

ing for some time. But soon the fire began to kindle. I know not that I ever heard more heart-piercing cries, as well from the young as the old. The people of God too, were exceedingly happy; praising him for his wonderful goodness to the children of men. Their cries and praises ascended for hours together, so that sometimes our meetings did not break up till one in the morning. Truly the Lord rained down the manna of his love in gracious showers; and several declared with joy that they found the pearl of great price.

“The people at Liverpool are all well, and most of them happy. They long to see you again; and I assure you I rejoice to find that the Lord has owned your labours amongst them, and I trust he will continue to do so until he calls you hence. Although we differ in sentiment, let us manifest our love to each other. I always admired your gifts and graces, and affectionately loved your person, although I could never receive your peculiar opinions. But shall we on this account destroy the work of God? God forbid! May the Lord take away all bigotry, and fill us with pure, genuine, catholic love! Wishing you God’s speed in every work to which the Lord calls you, I conclude with, When it is well with thee, remember me.

“WILLIAM BLACK.”

To the preceding letter was subjoined a P. S. requesting Mr. A. to lay aside all reserve in future, and favor him with his frequent correspondence. But the letter and the request were alike treated with indifference; and in their next interview Mr. A. said to him that he believed he (Mr. B.) had never known any thing of a saving change of heart. This, we cannot help

thinking, was an uncourteous declaration uttered in the temerity of the moment, of which his calmer judgment could not upon reflection approve. How mischievous is the influence of bigotry ! Well does the saintly Fletcher designate it, a *holy devil*. May the Spirit of the Lord purge his church from this insidious and pervading leaven ! Then, and not till then, shall the wisdom from above appear arrayed in all her attractive attributes ; and by their union and symmetry constitute the church once more the mansion of peace and concord, commanding the universal admiration of mankind.

While Mr. Black cultivated the amicable spirit towards Mr. Alline, exemplified in the above communication, he was so greatly concerned at witnessing the diffusive influence with which his unscriptural principles were operating in different parts of the country, that he furnished Mr. Wesley with a statement of them, and entreated him to write a brief refutation of them. But Mr. Wesley was doing a great work, and could not come down ; in addition to which, he deliberately thought that any public notice of Mr. Alline's system, (if such it may be called,) would only give it the more importance and notoriety, and thereby, instead of checking it, contribute, more probably, to its wider propagation. Mr. Wesley's letter in answer to the request bears the impress of his singular wisdom and discrimination.

“ LONDON, July 13th, 1783.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ It is a rule with me to answer all the letters which I receive. If, therefore, you have not received an an-

I.

swer to every letter which you have written, it must be, either that your letter or my answer has been intercepted.

“I do not wonder at all that after that great and extraordinary work of God there should be a remarkable decay. So we have found it in almost all places. A swift increase is generally followed by a decrease equally swift. All we can do to prevent it, is continually to exhort all who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to remember our Lord’s words, ‘Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.’

“Mr. Alline may have wit enough to do hurt ; but I fear he will never have wit enough to do good. He is very far from being a man of sound understanding ; but he has been dabbling in mystical writers, in matters which are too high for him, far above his comprehension. I dare not waste my time in answering such miserable jargon. I have better work. But I have sent you (with other books) two volumes of Mr. Law’s works, which contain all that Mr. Alline would teach if he could ; only it is the gold purged from the dross ; whereas he would give you the gold and dross shuffled together. I do not advise you ever to name his name in public, (although in private you must warn our brethren) but go on your way exactly as if there were no such person in the world.

“The school at Kingswood is exceeding full ; nevertheless there shall be room for *you*. And it is very probable if you should live to return to Halifax, you may carry one or more preachers with you. I will order Mr. Atley to send the books you sent for, to our German brethren. I hope you will live as brethren, and have a free and open intercourse with each other.

I commend you to Him who is able to make you perfect, stablish, settle you ; and am,

“ My Dear Brother,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

Mr. Black was peculiarly happy in having, during the early years of his ministry, in the revered founder of Methodism, a counsellor and a friend so eminently qualified from his profound and various knowledge, and particularly from his experience in connection with the work of God, for so long a series of years, to afford him the most judicious advice in perplexity, and to suggest the most appropriate topics of consolation under the disappointment of some of his cherished hopes. To him, therefore, he unbosomed himself on all occasions of embarrassment, with the confiding affection and ingenuousness of a son ; and it is impossible to say what amount of influence, the maxims of wisdom and paternal admonitions thus elicited, exerted on the formation of Mr. Black's ministerial character. There can exist no doubt that the course which Mr. Wesley recommended to his adoption, in reference to what was at this time the greatest source of uneasiness to him—the currency that Mr. Alline's opinions received from the popularity of his talents and the awakening power of his ministry—was much more likely to neutralize their influence than the most luminous and conclusive refutation of them, whether from the pulpit or the press. But the subject weighed heavily on Mr. Black's mind ; and before, it would seem, the preceding letter came to hand, he again respectfully urged upon Mr. Wesley the task of wielding his acute and powerful pen against those troublesome and per-

nicious errors,—an application, however, which drew from him the declaration that his polemical days were ended. If the reader entertains the same appreciation of that never-to-be-forgotten minister of Jesus, as the biographer does, he would feel a sensible disappointment at the suppression or even abridgement of any production of his mind, however small. Assuming this to be the case, I therefore give the letter in full.

“INVERNESS, May 11, 1784.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I am glad you have given a little assistance to our brethren at Halifax, and along the Coast. There is no charity under Heaven to be compared to this,—the bringing light to the poor Heathens that are called Christians; but nevertheless still sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. I am in great hopes that some of the emigrants from New York are really alive to God. And if so, they will be every way a valuable acquisition to the province where their lot is now cast. This may be one of the gracious designs of God’s Providence in bringing them from their native country. And if they not only themselves grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, but are likewise happy instruments in his hand of imparting that knowledge to others, they will have unspeakable reason to praise God, both in time and in eternity.

“There is no part of Calvinism or Antinomianism which is not fully answered in some part of our writings; particularly in the “Preservative from Unsettled Notions in Religion.” I have no more to do with answering books. It will be sufficient if you recommend to Mr. Alline’s friends, some of the tracts that are already written. As to himself, I fear he is wiser

in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason. Therefore I have no hope of his being convinced till death opens his eyes.

“The work of God goes on with a steady pace in various parts of England. But still the love of many will wax cold, while many others are continually added to supply their place. In the west of England, in Lancashire and in Yorkshire, God still mightily makes bare his arm. He convinces many, justifies many, and many are perfected in love.

“My great advice to those who are united together, is, Let brotherly love continue ! See that ye fall not out by the way ! Hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ! Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ !

“ I am,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

May the salutary and important monition with which this letter closes be indelibly graven upon the minds of all the followers of Him, who was meek and lowly in heart ! Whilst this coalescence of spiritual affection is, to those whom it animates, grateful as the odoriferous oil that descended upon Aaron’s head and flowed to the skirts of his robe, it directly tends to augment by concentration the efficiency of their efforts to promote the salvation of souls, and the glory of their common Lord. Few, it may be here remarked, have been more eminently distinguished for the cultivation of an affectionate and conciliatory spirit than Mr. Black. Always disposed to put the most favourable construction upon actions of doubtful character, and deprecating as an evil of no common magnitude

the alienation of brethren in Christ, he conscientiously and sedulously guarded alike against *giving*, and *taking* offence ; and whenever misunderstandings occurred among any of the objects of his pastoral charge, he was as ready to assume, as he was admirably fitted to discharge, the office of a peace-maker. Endowed with a singular degree of prudence and self-control, which were hallowed by Christian principle and matured by experience, he often succeeded, by seasonable interference, in extinguishing the kindling fires of discord, when many a minister of equally pure intentions, but of a less calculating and deliberative turn of mind, might by indiscretion have fomented instead of allayed, the evil. No man, probably, in the course of so long a life, ever more rarely inverted the order of nature and reason, by putting *action* before *thought*.

But it is time to return to his Journal. Under date of the 13th of September he records an impressive case of conversion which illustrates at once the obligation and the incentive of the apostolic injunction,—“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”—“During this visit it was that Mrs. Card, of Horton, found peace with God. She had formerly been an opposer ; but was now on a bed of affliction, and in great distress of mind, terribly agitated with the fear of death. For three weeks, she told me, she had not had above three nights' sleep. I endeavoured to improve the opportunity, by pressing upon her mind the nature and necessity of the new-birth, and of justification by faith. I asked permission to pray with her ; and while we were on our knees, the Lord manifested Himself in mercy to her soul. She broke out in transports of

praise, saying, 'O! I am in the bosom of Jesus! I am in the bosom of Jesus! O! the fear of hell is now gone! it is gone! I fear not hell! I fear not death!' Addressing her husband, she exclaimed, 'Oh! my dear! my soul was overwhelmed within me, but the Lord has delivered me! O I am happy! I am happy!'

"About this time also," he continues, "sister Scott of Windsor had a remarkable visitation. She had had a very dangerous travail; doctors and friends despaired of her life. At first her mind was beclouded; all sensible comfort was suspended. A deep sense of her unfaithfulness exceedingly depressed her. But her beloved soon appeared! and the gloom was so completely dispersed, that

' Not a cloud did arise,
To darken the skies,
Or hide for a moment, her Lord from her eyes.'⁵

Her whole soul seemed filled with heaven and God. Her joy was indeed unspeakable and full of glory. Weak as she was, she could not refrain from exhorting all around her, and breaking out in rapturous expressions of triumph."

In the fall of this year Mr. Black visited for the first time, Prince Edward Island, (then called the Island of St. John) at the earnest and repeated request of Mr. Benjamin Chappel, by whom he was gladly received 'in the name of a prophet.' This eccentric, but truly pious and upright man, had been for a number of years a member of the Methodist Society in England; and told me I think, in the only interview I ever had with him, in the year 1823, that he had often seen and heard the venerable founder of Methodism. He was at that period bending over the tomb under the accumulated infirmities of extreme old age, but

remarkably clear and collected in mind ; ready, after a life of irreproachable godliness, to be offered up ; and awaiting, not only without fear, but in joyful anticipation, the time of his departure from earth.—Mr. Black remained about a fortnight in the Island. The greater portion of the time was spent in Charlotte Town ; but he also preached two or three times at St. Peter's ; in neither place, however, were his labours attended with any animating tokens of efficiency. He sighed in spirit over the people, because of the hardness of their hearts, lamenting that, with few exceptions, they appeared total strangers to the nature of true religion,—the inward kingdom of “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

A sudden attack of illness on his return home from the Island, excited apprehensions that his earthly career was destined soon to close. But the prospect engendered no mental perturbation. Divine solace was opportunely imparted ; and instead of deprecating the not improbable event, he says, “It was my earnest prayer that if my usefulness was done, I might then finish my course and go to Him whom I loved supremely, though not perfectly. Blessed be God ! death has long since lost to me his terror and his sting. Many times the thoughts of it have made my heart to leap within me. At one time in particular when the Indians rose and made a number of people prisoners at Miramichi, and it was reported they were about to destroy all the friends of Government in Cumberland ;—at the news of this my heart rejoiced within me ; for I knew I had a mansion in heaven, a house beyond their reach,

‘That palace of angels and God.’

On my passage from the Island I fainted, and fell with great violence on deck. But for the main boom I should

have fallen into the sea. Blessed be God whose care is continually over me !”

We now approach the memorable period in Mr. Black's history when he formed that matrimonial alliance which, for nearly half a century, was to him not merely a

“Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,”

but subservient in a very eminent degree to his influence and usefulness in the church of God. The manner in which he took this important step was peculiarly marked by that Christian prudence which formed a prominent trait of his character. Aware, that in a minister of Christ, a union so intimate and influential must, necessarily, operate either as a painful drawback, or as a source of exhilaration, in the discharge of his momentous responsibilities ; and diffident of his own judgment in a matter that involved his affections, he endeavoured by earnest and importunate prayer for divine direction, and a deliberative anticipation of consequences, to ascertain satisfactorily the path of duty, before he advanced. The piety and precaution with which he entered into the matrimonial state will be best apprehended by an entry made in his Journal on that occasion :—“For some time previous I had had thoughts of marriage. At first I rejected the thought as a temptation. I had not the least scruple but that it was lawful for a minister to marry ; but as all things lawful are not expedient, I feared lest I should do my own will, and not the will of Heaven. I prayed again and again that the Lord would take away the desire if it was not his will ; and longed rather to die, than offend Him. I advised with my principal friends. They approved the design.

Yet still I feared. I solemnly cried to the Lord ; and often did I spread my cause before Him, beseeching that he would not permit the blind to go out of the way. At length, one day, after solemn prayer, I concluded (believing it to be the will of God,) to give my hand to Mary Gay of Cumberland ; and on the 17th of February, 1784, we were united in holy matrimony. We found it a solemn time ; and we both gave ourselves to the Lord and his service."—On a union formed upon such principles, and in entering into which the parties were animated with views so elevated and holy, and with a mutual persuasion—the results not of first impression, but of mature thought and importunate prayer—that they gave themselves to each other by the will of God, Providence could not fail to shed its selectest blessings. Marriage is a divine institute ; and it emanated from the *wisdom* and *benevolence*, as well as from the *authority* of God. He saw that, with the social nature He had given man, his happiness would have been incomplete if doomed to a state of solitude ; He saw that "it was not *good* for man to be alone." As an additional evidence of His benignity he therefore provided an help-meet for him, a companion endued with the same intellectual capacities, with accordant social susceptibilities, and the heir and expectant with himself, of the same reverent and immortal bliss. This interesting relation has not, it is true, in the sad reverse that has taken place in man's condition, escaped the blighting consequences of sin : yet is it still *benevolent* in its *design*, and when hallowed by devout and intelligent reference, (as in the case we have been contemplating,) to the glory of God, most *beneficent*, also, in its *tendency*. To those who marry "in the Lord," it is of all earthly

relations the source of the richest enjoyment, and the most effectual lenitive of the sorrows inseparable from the condition of mortality. If they who approach the hymeneal altar with light and precipitous footstep, without any recognition of the will of God, or any view but which terminates in the present transient scene, find marriage, instead of realising their fairy visions, to prove a source of infelicity, the blame is attributable only to their own irreligion and folly.

“ Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that hast survived the fall !
Thou art not known where pleasure is adored,
That reeling goddess with the zoneless waist.”

A larger portion of this vestige of primeval happiness than that enjoyed by Mr. Black through a long series of years, has rarely, we believe, fallen to the lot of any individual. Were we indeed to affirm that no man was ever more felicitous in the choice of a companion for life, those who knew her best are the very last from whom we should anticipate the charge of exaggeration. In the subsequent pages of our narrative we shall often have occasion to notice the superior excellence of her character ; but it is due to the rare assemblage of estimable qualities with which she was adorned, not to pass them over in silence in this place. Of those qualities, the most important were the product of the renewing Spirit of God ; and the rest which were essential to the symmetry of her character, received a value and a lustre from the grace with which she was abundantly endued, which they could not otherwise have possessed.—Her conversion to God was clear and decided ; and it would be difficult to select from the annals of religious biography an instance of one who, for an equal period of time, exhibited a brighter or more

beautiful and uniform example of Christian piety. Unequivocal evidence of her decision was given, in her associating herself with the Methodist Society at a time when it was despised and calumniated, notwithstanding the high respectability and remonstrances of her family ; and still more, in becoming the wife of a Methodist Minister. Actuated by the faith of him who esteemed "the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt," there was no earthly distinction she was unwilling to forego, no temporal privation she was not ready to sustain, for conscience's sake. In whatever aspect we contemplate her virtues, they present an attractive evolution of the best principles of nature and of grace. To her husband she was most tenderly attached ; his wishes she anticipated with all the sagacity and promptitude of devoted affection ; his sorrows she alleviated by sympathy, and his pleasures she heightened by participation. She fully entered also into his ministerial solitudes and obligations ; in the chamber of affliction, and among the poor of his charge she afforded him unobtrusive, but most efficient aid. Her maternal character was not less exemplary. One of her sons now living has stated, that it was her practice when any of her children had been guilty of some grosser act of disobedience, whether to divine or parental authority, to take the little culprit to a private room, and there, after administering appropriate admonition, and, if necessary, corporal chastisement, to engage in earnest and affectionate prayer with the delinquent, who seldom failed to leave the apartment without a tender consciousness of guilt, and resolves of amendment in future. Whilst thus distinguished by the conscientious discharge of responsibilities of paramount obligation, she was not inattentive to the

duties of a subordinate class. The order of her house presented at all times a pattern of neatness, economy and comfort.

But, if I would exhibit an accurate delineation of Mrs. Black's character, I must borrow the pencil, or rather the portrait, of inspiration. So truly was Solomon's graphic and inimitable appreciation of the virtuous wife exemplified in her spirit and deportment, that it may well be doubted whether it could be read by any who were well acquainted with her, without suggesting, by an immediate association of ideas, her image to their minds: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff. She stretcheth forth her hands to the poor; yea, she stretcheth forth her hands to the needy. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."^{*}

* Proverbs xxxi.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. BLACK RELINQUISHES THE IDEA OF GOING TO KINGSWOOD—HIS LITERARY ATTAINMENTS—MR. WESLEY'S FIRST LETTER TO HIM AFTER HIS MARRIAGE—STATE OF RELIGION AT SHELBURNE AND BIRCHTOWN—HAPPY SEASON AT LIVERPOOL—LETTER FROM MRS. BLACK—VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES—TEMPTATION TO DESPONDENCY—MEETS DR. COKE—ACCOMPANIES THE DR. TO PERRY-HALL—CONVERSION OF MR. GOUGH—MESSRS. GARRETSON AND CROMWELL APPOINTED TO NOVA-SCOTIA—THE 'CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE'—REVIVAL AT BOSTON—MR. GARRETSON'S CHARACTER AND LABOURS—MR. BLACK'S LETTER TO THE SOCIETY AT CUMBERLAND.

IN reviewing the circumstances connected with Mr. Black's marriage, we have seen disclosed the operations of a mind deeply imbued with those qualities best adapted to ensure safe direction in all the important exigencies of human life—prudent sagacity, and a devout regard to the intimations of the divine will, whether suggested mentally, or by the course of outward events. Before assuming this new and endearing relation, with its concomitant cares and obligations, he of course relinquished the project of going to Kingswood school, deeming the alternative, all things considered, more in accordance with the great object for

which it was his meat and his drink to live—the glory of God.

That a mind so desirous and susceptible of higher cultivation, should have been precluded, by a series of providential circumstances, from the means of attaining it to the extent of its aspirations, may seem a misfortune; and some probably will entertain the opinion, that to a matter of so much consequence to a Christian minister every other consideration should have given way. Such, however, was not the view of the judicious Wesley, although his paternal affection for Mr. Black prompted him to tender him every facility at his disposal, for the gratification of the hallowed emulation he felt to become more eminently qualified to edify the church of God. Mr. Wesley knew as well as any man who ever lived, the value to be attached to classical learning and resources of general knowledge, in connection with the sacred office. Few ever possessed them in a more eminent degree, or were capable of wielding them with greater dexterity and effect in the cause of truth and righteousness than himself. But he likewise knew that they are not indispensable to a thorough understanding, nor, under ordinary circumstances, to the acceptable and effective preaching of the glorious gospel of Christ. And in view of the peculiar circumstances under which Mr. Black had been called into the work, and of the extreme difficulty of obtaining suitable persons for carrying on the blessed revival of experimental religion in Nova Scotia, which he was instrumental in originating, it was his deliberate opinion that the course Mr. Black adopted was the wisest and the best.

It is not invidious to say, that although Mr. Black did not enjoy the advantages of a regular classical

training, he was incomparably better fitted for the work of an evangelist than thousands who have ascended the sacred desk adorned with academic honours. A *show* of learning is not always accompanied with the *reality*; and were the actual attainments of many—who vituperate, with abundance of self complacency, an uneducated ministry—as they speak, generally known, they would blush at their own lofty pretensions. It is quite possible, also, for a person consecrated to the service of the sanctuary, to cultivate literature and science in all their departments *con amore*, and even to shine in the peerage of intellect, and yet, to be totally destitute of that principle of grace, without which the eloquence of men and of angels is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; without which, though we understood all mysteries and all knowledge, we should be nothing. In Germany, where biblical learning is in many respects far in advance of every other nation, theology, jurisprudence and medicine are known by the name of “bread studies;” (*Brotstudien*) and when every qualification for holy functions is, in the estimation of those in whose power it is to influence the character of candidates, merged in scholastic attainments, the office, if not already secularised, is in imminent danger of soon becoming so. In making these remarks we would not be misunderstood, either as to our view of the Christian ministry, or of the respected subject of our narrative. On the former our conceptions are already indicated with sufficient explicitness, and guarded, we hope, against any necessity of misapprehension.

In relation to Mr. Black's acquirements in sacred learning at this period, we cannot take upon us to speak with certainty; but we know that, during the

time of our personal acquaintance with him, he possessed a critical knowledge of the New Testament in the original, which must have been the result of many years' application. In studying the Greek Testament, Parkhurst's Lexicon was his favourite thesaurus, and he knew well to discriminate the sound learning and theology with which that inestimable work abounds, from the fancies and eccentricities both etymological and philosophical, with which they are sometimes associated. The writer of these pages has often been edified and delighted with his illustrative observations on portions of scripture, in private conversation, drawn from the latent meaning of some prominent word, as indicated by the force of the original expression. And I well remember, that at an early period of my ministerial life, he earnestly recommended to my careful attention Parkhurst's work, alledging that, with all its faults, it contained, for one who was anxious to study the Christian Scriptures for himself, the best commentary upon them, extant. In this judgment, which weighed much with us at the time, we are disposed, so far as sound criticism and *theology* are concerned, still to concur. The paucity of instances given under each head, and the looseness of the references to profane authors are, indeed, inconvenient defects in Parkhurst's work; nor in giving the various senses of the same word is it always marked by sufficient accuracy of discrimination. The labours of recent German Lexicographers, those especially of Schlensuer, Bretschneider, and Wahl, supply in those respects an important desideratum to the biblical student. "That these books, however," to use the words of the Rev. Mr. Rose, the accomplished editor of the last edition of Parkhurst's work, which he has very materially mo-

dified and improved, "That these books should entirely usurp the place of a work as much superior to them in sound principle, as it is, perhaps, inferior in some other respects, is a subject of serious regret : for although what is commonly termed Rationalism does not appear in its worst form in the books I have referred to, it has occasionally had no inconsiderable influence on the interpretations which they present." While Mr. Black carefully studied the Greek Testament, he was not neglectful of the Latin language, in which his attainments were very respectable. It was his custom in the closing years of his life, and probably much earlier, at family prayer, to read in connection with the scriptures a portion of Thomas a Kempis' Christian Pattern,—Mrs. Black reading the translation while he followed her in the original. To return from this digression, into which we have been led by a desire to obviate misconception, we may here present the reader with the first letter addressed by Mr. Wesley to Mr. Black after he had heard of his marriage.

"LONDON, Oct. 15, 1784.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"A letter of yours some time ago, gave me hopes of meeting you in England ; as you seemed desirous of spending some time here in order to improve yourself in learning. But as you have now entered into a different state, I do not expect we shall meet in this world. But you have a large field of action where you are, without wandering into Europe. Your present Parish is wide enough, namely Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. I do not advise you to go any further. In the

other Provinces* there are abundance of Preachers. They can spare four Preachers to you, better than you can spare one to them. If I am rightly informed, they have already sent you one or two ; and they may afford you one or two more, if it please God to give a prosperous passage to Dr. Coke and his fellow labourers. Does there not want a closer and more direct connection between you of the north, and the societies under Francis Asbury ? Is it not more advisable that you should have a constant correspondence with each other, and act by united counsels ? Perhaps it is for want of this that so many have drawn back. I want a more particular account of the societies in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. And I wish you would give me a full account of the manner wherein God hath dealt with you from the beginning. I am not at all glad of Mr. Scurr's intention to remove from Nova Scotia to the South. That is going from a place where he is much wanted, to a place where he is not wanted. I think if he got ten thousand pounds thereby, it would be but a poor bargain ; that is upon the supposition which you and I make, that *souls* are of more value than *gold*. Peace be with all your spirits !

“ I am,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

In accordance with the salutary suggestions of this letter, it was Mr. Black's constant endeavour to maintain a free and friendly intercourse with the societies under Mr. Asbury's charge, both by correspondence and occasional personal visits. Of these visits, the results, some of which will be afterwards detailed,

* The United States.

will live in the history of American Methodism in some of its most important positions. In several parts of the United States, but particularly at Boston, Mr. Black's memory is still cherished with an affection and veneration scarcely less than attach to it in Nova Scotia. Mr. Scurr, the excellent man referred to at the close of the letter; repented too late, that he had not acted as Mr. Wesley advised. He purchased an estate in the neighbourhood of Norfolk in Virginia; but almost all his family fell victims to the diseases incident to the climate.

On Sunday, the 17th of April, 1784, we find Mr. Black at Shelburne, after having visited Windsor and Halifax on his way thither, under which date the following interesting entry occurs in his Journal:—

“ I preached three times and met two classes; one of white people, and the other blacks. The blacks are very lively. O that they might provoke the whites to jealousy, to love and to good works! The day following, eight of the friends accompanied me in a boat to Birchtown, where I preached to about two hundred negroes. Some were deeply affected, and others greatly comforted. It is indeed wonderful to see what a blessed work the Lord has been carrying on among these poor creatures. Within seven or eight months past, upwards of sixty of them profess to have found peace with God. And what is further remarkable is, that the principal instrument God has employed in this work is a poor negro, who can neither see, walk, nor stand. He is usually carried by another man to the place of worship, where he sits and speaks to the people, or kneels and prays with them.” There were at this time more than two hundred members in society at Shelburne and Birchtown, of whom only twenty

were whites. At the latter place, now almost completely deserted, there were fourteen classes in a prosperous state.

After this very pleasing and profitable visit, Mr. Black went to Liverpool, where, as on previous occasions, unusual demonstrations of the power of the Most High crowned his ministrations :—

“ Monday, 26th.—On receiving the news of my arrival, the friends flocked together ; we had a comfortable evening ; we could praise God with gladness, and rejoice that he had brought us to see each others’ faces again in the flesh.

“ Wednesday, 28th.—This was a comfortable day to me and to many more. Under the word many were bathed in tears. On the 29th many were so filled with the spirit of glory and of God, that they said their mortal frames could hardly sustain it. O how did they rejoice, and utter the memory of his goodness ! O my God ! what blessings thou heapest upon the heads of those who believe ! Blessed be the name of the Lord that ever he made me a partaker of these immortal hopes ! O what an infinite fulness of grace is laid up in Jesus ! Give me, O my God ! only give me to enjoy thy sacred smiles, a sweet sense of thy approbation and love, and I cheerfully resign the world to its deceived votaries.

“ Honours, wealth, or pleasures mean,
I neither have nor want.”

“ May 2d.—I preached twice, and we had several meetings for prayer and exhortation. The people seemed much engaged with God. We had scarcely time or inclination to eat. O, what a memorable day was this ! Some were abundantly blessed, while others trembled, wept, and cried, groaning for redemption in

the blood of Christ. Lord send them help from thy holy hill ! May none of them ever turn again, like the dog to his vomit ! On the 3d we had another wonderful meeting. One woman, whose harp had for a long time hung upon the willows, and her soul in captivity, was filled with joy unspeakable. O, with what exultation of spirit did she praise her great Deliverer ! Glory to thy free, matchless, and infinite love ! O Lord ! let my soul but always enjoy this love, and be thus delightfully engaged in thy service, and it sufficeth me. Once I wished that I had never been born ; now I bless thee that thou hast given me an immortal nature capable of thy love." Invigorated by these glorious displays of the mercy of God, he set sail for Halifax, and anxious to spend the next Sabbath at Windsor, lost no time in pressing forward, although he had to walk the whole of the way, a distance of forty-five miles. Here he received from Mrs. Black the subjoined letter, so beautifully illustrative of her piety to God, and affection for him, and so well adapted to so- lace his mind amid the toils of his itinerancy.

" CUMBERLAND, April 29, 1784.

" My Dear Husband in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ,

" Were it not that I believe you are employed in the business of your Lord and Master, I should be apt to complain of the time of absence seeming long. But I desire in all things to submit with patience to his righteous disposal.

" I trust you are going on with vigour and cheerfulness in your Master's work ; if so I am sure you have your reward as you go along. Sometimes I look around upon the unthinking world with pity and tenderness, and say within my heart, O that they knew

what a hard master they served ; and what a glorious, precious, compassionate master Jesus is ! At present my soul seems to feel what Mrs. Rowe expresses in these lines—

“ O ! blow these clouds away, and let me see,
Those distant glories that attract my love !
I must be satisfied—these longings quenched,
These infinite desires must find an object,
Or thou hast made thy noblest work in vain.

“ Since you left here, the Lord has been pleased to call away several by sudden death. The week before last, James Easterbrook's wife died, forty-eight hours after she was seized with the throat distemper. Mr. P. has lost his oldest son, and Mr. John Rye's wife also fell a victim to the same influenza. I know, my dear, it will rejoice your heart greatly to hear that she went out of the world with the most transporting views of a blessed immortality. She called her friends one by one, and begged that they would not mourn for her, but for themselves, for she knew that her soul was going to glory. She entreated her husband to look upon the children, not as his own but the Lord's, merely committed to his charge for awhile, and as such to watch over them. She appeared to have a very hard struggle in death ; but the foretastes of glory which her soul experienced were such, that she felt, comparatively, no pain. She said, she beheld the blessed angels waiting to convey her soul to the bosom of her blessed Redeemer. In ecstasies of joy she left the world, singing as she departed, ‘ O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ? ’ So great were her joys at leaving the world, that her husband said, trying as the separation was, he could not mourn for her.--Indeed, if our hearts are right with

God, we shall rather shed tears of joy, than of sorrow, when we see a dear friend going to Paradise, in so wonderful and glorious a manner. O that we may be enabled to make a wise improvement of this awful event of Providence, and press home upon our souls the solemn inquiry, 'Art thou, O *my* soul, ready for the Bridegroom ? and wouldst thou welcome him as Mrs. Rye did ?' Here I pause and think—how can so vile, so unbelieving a heart as this partake of so much glory ? Blessed God ! all things are possible with thee. O my Redeemer, quicken thou me according to thy word ; for my soul cleaveth unto the dust ! May the Lord be with you, give you much of his spiritual presence, fill your heart with love, and bring you safe to your friends here. Thus prays

“ Your dear and affectionate,

“ MARY BLACK.”

Mr. Black reached Cumberland on the 26th of May, and laboured in that portion of the country, though without any very animating tokens of success, until the 15th of September. He found the cause at a low ebb ; and with a vivid remembrance of a very different state of things, who can wonder that his reflections on the contrast are tinged with melancholy ?—June 3d he thus writes—“ I preached at Mr. Donkins'. There is little of the life of God among the people here in comparison of what there once was. O how sad the change ! Riding once by this house I found a number of our friends, after returning from meeting at Mr. Scurr's, had gathered together for prayer. Mr. D. handed me a hymn-book—I gave out a verse, and afterwards delivered a short exhortation. That night, four professed to have found redemption in the blood

of Jesus Christ. O what a night ! O what times then ! but how different now ! Where, O where, is our first love ?”

The societies were now so greatly augmented, and scattered over so extensive a field, or, to adopt Mr. Wesley's phraseology, Mr. Black's parish had become so wide as to render it totally impracticable for him to superintend effectually the spiritual interests of all the societies, without help. For that assistance he naturally turned his eye towards the neighbouring States, and, hoping by his personal representations and requests to be able to prevail upon some of the zealous brethren there to come over and help him, he set out for Baltimore, *via* Boston. In this city he preached twice, and not without evident usefulness ; one experienced the pardoning love of God under the first sermon, and under the second several were deeply awakened. On the 20th of October, he arrived in New York, and inquiring immediately for the Methodist preaching-house, found he was just in time to attend divine service to be held there that evening. He preached in the same place the following evening from—“ Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of the light.” After preaching he visited an afflicted woman, in company with the brethren Dickins and Sands. She lay at the point of death, and had for sometime been in deep mental distress. That day she had experienced some alleviation, but could not say with confidence, that she had obtained remission of her sins. After conversing with her awhile, they engaged in earnest prayer. Mr. Black's mind was peculiarly drawn out in intercession for the trembling, expiring object of their common solicitude ; and while pouring out his

heart before God, he felt a divine persuasion that the Lord would in mercy receive her to his arms. And it was so. About three o'clock next morning, she died in the full triumph of faith, crying "Why are his chariot wheels so long in coming? Glory! Glory! be to thy blessed name!"

Inexperienced in travelling in a strange country, Mr. Black's mind became the subject of depressing exercises in the further prosecution of his journey. Far from home—surrounded by strangers, with his money nearly exhausted—the adversary took advantage of his circumstances to tempt him to revoke his trust in the providence of his heavenly father. The temptation followed him even to the pulpit. There, however, the snare was broken, and the cloud dispelled. The first words that presented themselves to him on opening the Bible were, "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Matt. vi: 28, &c. He felt reprov'd and comforted. His heart was filled with joyous confidence in God; and the prospect so recently overcast, brightened before him, unshaded by a single doubt. He called the name of the Lord, *Jehovah Jirah*. On the Sabbath he preached to the prisoners in the gaol, some of whom were awaiting in awful expectancy the severest penalty of the law. Terrific situation! "But how much more awful," reflected Mr. Black, "to see sinners bound by the chains of sin, and dying without hope, to be reserved in chains of darkness unto the judg-

ment of the great day." After preaching the following Sabbath on Long Island, he attended, at the request of the Sheriff, the execution of two men who were hanged at a place called Jamaica. He prayed with them, and commended them to the mercy of God, but says nothing indicative of hope in their death.

Late in October he met the Rev. Mr. Whatcoat, at Addington in Maryland, who had just arrived from England, in company with Dr. Coke; and after travelling with him more than a week, represents him as a man of an humble and affectionate spirit. His long-cherished desire of seeing Dr. Coke was gratified on the fourteenth of December. The following day he heard that apostolic man preach at Gunpowder meeting-house, and received from his hands the symbols of his Redeemer's dying love. It was a season of refreshing to Mr. Black; and in the spirit of renewed and unlimited dedication to God he exclaims—
"O my God, I am thine by a thousand ties—necessary—voluntary, and sacred. Sanctuaries—woods—fields and other places, have been witnesses of the solemn vows and engagements I am under to Thee, and when I presumptuously violate them, they will bring in their evidences against me. O! by thy powerful grace, preserve me thine, thine for ever!"

On the 17th he accompanied Dr. Coke and four other preachers to Perry Hall, "the most spacious and elegant building," he observes, "I have seen in America." He continues, "It is about fifteen miles from Baltimore. Mr. Gough, its owner, is a Methodist, though supposed to be worth one hundred thousand pounds. He is not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He has built a neat stone meeting-house, entertains the circuit preacher, and at times preaches

himself. And thus he continued to act during the late war, at the risk of his immense estate. Before his conversion he persecuted his wife, and would not permit her to hear the Methodists by whom she had been awakened. But it happened one evening, while he was drinking with some of his dissipated associates, (Mr. Asbury having an appointment to preach in the neighbourhood) one of them said, 'Let us go and hear the Methodist preacher.' He complied without hesitation, saying within himself, 'I shall now have an opportunity of overturning all the babbling that has to say.' They accordingly went; but God took the wise in his own craftiness. That night he was convinced that the doctrine he had opposed was the very Gospel of Jesus Christ. On leaving the meeting-house, one of his companions said, 'What a heap of nonsense we have heard!' But he stopped him short with 'No! What we have heard is the very truth as it is in Jesus.' But although his prejudices were now removed, the word of God did not produce its full effect upon his heart, until some time after, taking a ride to one of his plantations, he overheard an individual fervently engaged in prayer. Approaching nearer, he found it was a black man who had come from a neighbouring plantation to pray with some of his slaves. He was blessing and praising the Lord in a very affecting manner, and seemed astonished at the kindness of the Lord, alike to his body and to his soul. This prayer struck Mr. Gough to the heart. 'Alas!' he exclaimed, 'O Lord! I have my thousands and my tens of thousands—this man has scarcely clothes to put on, or food to eat; and yet, ungrateful wretch that I am! I never thanked thee in this manner.' Distress and anguish seized upon his spirit. On his return home he thus accosted

his wife—'My dear, I shall never hinder you again from hearing the Methodists preach.' 'This was welcome news to her, and what she had often prayed for. While under conviction of sin, he was strongly tempted to destroy himself, but God, in a remarkable manner, kept back his soul from death.

"His convictions were now too pungent to be thrown off. A number of his friends happening one day to visit him, his distress became so overwhelming that he left them abruptly, and retired to his closet to give vent to his feelings. And there, while on his knees imploring mercy, the Lord set his soul at liberty. His load of sin was gone. So transporting was his joy that he hastened back to the company, crying, 'I have found, I have found, the Methodist blessing! and the Methodists' God!—Though not many rich, not many noble, are called, yet blessed be God, there are some.'"

Mr. Black had several opportunities of laying before Dr. Coke a detailed account of the state of the work in Nova Scotia, previously to the sitting of Conference, which opened at Baltimore on the 24th of December, and closed on the first day of the year 1785. At this Conference, the brethren, Freeborn Garrettson, and James O. Cromwell were designated to the work in Nova Scotia. The intercourse of the preachers on this occasion, both official and private, was marked with the utmost harmony and love, and presented to Mr. Black's mind a delightful and edifying exemplification of the spirit that animated the first commissioned heralds of divine grace. "Perhaps" says he, "such a number of holy, zealous, godly men, never before met together in Maryland—perhaps not on the continent of America."

This Conference which, from the unusual period at which it was called together, has been designated the 'Christmas Conference,' forms an important epoch in the history of American Methodism. Up to this period, the Methodist societies on this side the Atlantic, had remained destitute of the ordinances, only as they received from the hands of other ministers, their own being unordained. This inconvenience, which as the societies increased became proportionally an object of solicitude, had elicited the most earnest applications to Mr. Wesley to supply the deficiency, but without effect. Without a deviation from the order of the Church to which he belonged, he could not meet their wishes, and to this he was unwilling to commit himself. As soon, however, as the independence of the United States was achieved, the ecclesiastical control of Great Britain over the country ceasing with its political, Mr. Wesley hastened to respond to their solicitations; and at this Conference was introduced among them, at his suggestion and under his sanction, that system of ecclesiastical polity which has contributed so astonishingly, under God, to the expansion and stability of the cause. In organizing the societies in America, called after his name, into a Church, it was of course Mr. Wesley's first wish to approximate as nearly as possible to what he deemed the primitive model. Thomas Coke, LL.D., was selected as being, from his eminent zeal and abilities, as well as from his clerical standing, the most suitable agent for introducing the new economy. Accordingly, Mr. Wesley, assisted by other presbyters of the Church of England, on the 2d of September, 1784, solemnly set apart the Dr. as Superintendent of the Methodist Societies in America, and furnished him with letters of ordination.

Messrs. Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, who had volunteered their services for America, were ordained as presbyters, at the same time, by Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke and Mr. Creighton, another clergyman of the Church of England. The plan thus devised and recommended by Mr. Wesley was unhesitatingly and unanimously adopted by the American brethren in Conference. And as Dr. Coke, in consequence of the increasing demand for his exertions in other departments of the work, could not permanently discharge the functions of Superintendent of the Societies in America, Mr. Francis Asbury was, by the appointment of Mr. Wesley and the entire concurrence of his brethren, consecrated at the same Conference by Dr. Coke, assisted by Mr. Otterbine, a German minister of unsuspected piety, to the office of a Superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Messrs. Garrettson and Cromwell set forth without loss of time, for the new field of labour to which they were destined. They proceeded by the way of New York, but Mr. Black, having left his wife among her friends at Hingham, took a passage in a schooner bound for Boston. After a disagreeable and perilous passage, he arrived at Hyena, near Barnstable, on the 20th. Instant in season and out of season, he improved the few days he was detained here by preaching six or seven times. By means of this unlooked-for, and apparently accidental visit, many were roused from a state of spiritual indifference, and two individuals were converted to God. From Barnstable he proceeded by land to Hingham, where he arrived on the 26th, and found Mrs. Black well.

On the first of February they went to Boston, and remained there, with little interruption, till about the

middle of May. Methodism had as yet gained no footing in Boston. To Mr. Black belongs the honour of having laid the foundation of its temple in that important and enlightened city. At first, being unable to procure the use of any pulpit, he preached in private houses. The floor of the apartment in which he commenced preaching, in the north end of the town, sinking under the pressure of the crowd that attended, he removed to a large room in the opposite end of the town. The interest excited drew together a still greater multitude; during prayer, the beams gave way, and the people were thrown into a state of the greatest consternation. No one, however, sustained any serious injury. The *select men* as they were called, were now applied to for the use of the north Latin school, in which they obligingly consented to allow Mr. Black to hold his meetings. But, strange to relate, a similar misfortune took place here, and created such alarm among the people that it became necessary to seek a place better adapted in strength and spaciousness for their accommodation. The use of the Sandemanian meeting-house was offered and gratefully accepted, but it was soon found inadequate to contain more than a quarter of the people who were anxious to attend. The committee of the congregation to whom the Rev. Mr. Stillman ministered, now extended an invitation to Mr. Black, in perfect accordance with the wishes of their excellent minister, to occupy their place of worship. Here he preached three or four times; but neither was this sufficiently large to accommodate the thousands who flocked to hear the word, and feel the power, of the Redeemer. He afterwards preached in the Rev. Mr. Elliot's church, the only one in the city capable of containing the people. The number pre-

sent the last day he officiated in Boston, was estimated at three thousand. The deep and pervading influence which Mr. Black's preaching produced upon the public mind in this city was not to be attributed to the popularity of his talents, though as a preacher he was not unattractive. His whole soul was in the work. He was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. This was the charm of his eloquence—this the secret of its persuasive and subduing power. An extensive revival of the work of God was the result of these exertions. As there was no Methodist society there, nearly all who were brought to God, became members of Mr. Stillman's church; and according to Mr. Black's appreciation of the character of that faithful minister, they could not have fallen into better hands, to receive that pastoral attention which they required. This was one of the bright periods of Mr. Black's life, on which he ever looked back with emotions of gratitude and delight; nor had it perished from the memory of all in Boston, when, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, he proclaimed in the same city the everlasting Gospel of Christ. Several, when he preached there in 1822, hung around the pulpit, who, calling to remembrance the former times, recognised in the messenger of the churches who addressed them, now venerable with age, the man who, in the bloom and fervour of youth, had warned them, not without effect, to flee from the wrath to come. What a thrilling presage do such interviews afford, of the mutual and inconceivable joy with which ministers and the living seals of their apostleship will greet each other in the day of the Lord Jesus! Then shall we appreciate without idolising, the instruments of our conversion to God; and these while crowned with the joy and the glory of the spiri-

tual triumph, will depose all their honours at the feet of the Lamb.

Mr. Black with feelings of inexpressible tenderness towards those whom he had thus been the means of introducing into the liberty of the children of God, commended them to his grace, and returned to Nova Scotia, where he arrived about the last of May. He hastened to consult with Mr. Garrettson, who was then at Falmouth, concerning the state of the work and the best means of promoting its extension and depth. Mr. Garrettson, who had now been three months in Nova Scotia, and besides his labours at Halifax had already visited some of the most important settlements in the province, was a man of deep and uniform piety, of flaming zeal, and of highly useful talents. The affectionate veneration which still attaches to his memory in Nova Scotia, entitle him to more than a passing notice. The spirit of prudence and zeal with which he entered upon this new scene of ministerial toil, will be seen from the following letter, written by him to Dr. Coke shortly after his arrival in the province :—

“ HALIFAX, 1785.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“ After a stormy and dangerous passage of thirteen days, we arrived safely at Halifax, where we met with a kind reception from Mr. Marchington, and a few other poor sheep in the wilderness. As yet I do not know as much of the country or the state of affairs as I shortly shall, God being my helper.

“ A few days ago brother Cromwell set sail for Shelburne. Brother Marchington has hired a house at ten dollars a month, that will contain about three hundred

souls. I have preached five sermons. The number is increased so that we have now our little apartment filled. I cannot speak of any visible good, more than that they seem to hear with attention and solemnity, and I have formed a society of seven or eight members. Shortly after I came to town, I waited on the old rector. 'Sir,' said he, 'you are on a blessed errand; I will do what I can in assisting you. I desire to see the Gospel spread.'

"The next day I waited on his Excellency, the Governor, accompanied by Mr. Marchington. I found him very accessible. After telling him my business, from whence I was, and by whom I was sent: 'Mr. Wesley,' said he, 'is a good man—a very good man. How long do you purpose to stay?' I told him, twelve months or two years. 'I am glad you called on me: you have my approbation, and whenever you call for my assistance, if I can help you I will.' I could but humbly thank him.

"God willing, on Monday next I purpose to take a tour through the country, to collect, if possible, the sheep so widely scattered. I believe there are many precious souls who desire to hear us. I am well assured we shall have hard work this year; but who would not labour and suffer in so good a cause? I bless God for health and as great a desire as ever to do his blessed will, and spend and be spent in the best of causes. * * * * I am fully persuaded that our voyage to this part of the world is of God; the very time when preachers of our order ought to have come. But if possible we must be assisted, for our preachers are left without horses, and but four pounds a-piece. Next year, I trust the people will be able to support the Gospel. By the grace of God, I shall do all that

lies in my power to promote the Redeemer's Kingdom.

"Dear Sir,

"I remain,

"Your affectionate friend and brother,

"F. GARRETTSON."

"*To the Rev. Dr. Coke.*

We are indebted for the preceding letter to an interesting memoir of Mr. Garrettson, compiled by Dr. Bangs of New York ; and we are sure that the insertion here of one from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Garrettson, soon after his designation as a missionary to Nova Scotia, will be gratifying to our readers, especially as, while it bears honourable testimony to the character of this holy and self-denying man, it naturally interweaves with the thread of our narrative.

"DUBLIN, June 26, 1785.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Dr. Coke gives some account of you in his journal, so that although I have not seen you, I am not a stranger to your character. By all means send me, when you have opportunity, a more particular account of your experience and travels. It is no way improbable that God may find out a way for you to visit England, and it may be the means of your receiving more strength, as well as more light. It is a very desirable thing that the children of God should communicate their experience to each other ; and it is generally most profitable when they can do it face to face. Till Providence opens a way for you to see Europe, do all you can for a good master in America.

"I am glad brother Cromwell and you have undertaken that labour of love, the visiting Nova Scotia,

and doubt not but you act in full concert with the little handful who were almost alone till you came. It will be the wisest way to make all who desire to join together, thoroughly acquainted with the whole Methodist plan, and to accustom them from the beginning to the accurate observance of all our rules. Let none of them rest in being half Christians. Whatever they do, let them do it with their might, and it will be well, as soon as any of them find peace with God, to exhort them to go on to perfection. The more explicitly and strongly you press all believers to aspire after entire sanctification, as attainable now by simple faith, the more the whole work of God will prosper.

“ I do not expect any great matters from the Bishop. I doubt his eye is not single, and if it be not, he will do little good to you, or any one else. It may be a comfort to you that you have no need of him : you want nothing which he can give.

“ It is a noble proposal of brother Marchington ; but I doubt it will not take place. You do not know the state of the English Methodists. It is with the utmost difficulty that we can raise five or six hundred pounds a year, to supply our contingent expenses, so that it is entirely impracticable to raise five hundred pounds among them to build houses in America. It is true they might do much ; but it is a sad observation,—they that have most money have usually least grace. The peace of God be with all your spirits.

“ I am,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

The distinguished success that attended Mr. Garretson's labours in Nova Scotia, and the good report

which, through his faith and indefatigable exertions he had obtained, induced Mr. Wesley to request his acceptance of the superintendence of the Methodist societies in the British dominions in America. Dr. Coke made known Mr. Wesley's wishes at the Conference which was held in Baltimore, May 1, 1787; and they received the unanimous sanction of that body. But from further information elicited on the subject in their subsequent deliberations, they deemed it inexpedient finally to confirm the appointment, and designated Mr. Garrettson to preside in the Peninsula. This alteration took place without Mr. Garrettson's concurrence, and contrary to the anticipations with which he, a few days previous, left the Conference, to prepare for his important mission.

To no one was this interference with Mr. Wesley's plan a source of deeper regret than to Mr. Black. He had for two years witnessed Mr. Garrettson's faith, manner of life, charity, with sentiments of growing esteem, and instead of regarding him as a rival, rejoiced in the honour that God had put upon him, and in the prospect of his still higher elevation in connection with Methodism in British America. In a letter dated Cornwallis, March 10, addressed, it is believed, to Dr. Coke—for the inscription is wanting—expressly for the purpose of procuring the sanction of the American Conference to Mr. Wesley's appointment of Mr. Garrettson, he thus writes:—"Brother Garrettson has been a great blessing to us in this province. The hearts of the preachers and people are more than ever united to him; and we believe that were he to return to us he would be more extensively useful than heretofore; for the ears of the people are more than ever open to hear his message. He is better ac-

quainted with the peculiar dispositions of the people than any one else, and therefore would be more likely to do them good. Thinking it to be his duty to attend the Conference in the United States, we fear when he finds so many urgent calls for help in that extensive country, that he will be tempted to forget us in this dark corner of the world. At the same time we cannot but think it to be his duty to return. We are truly sorry that he refused the superintendency,* but hope when he sees you he may accept that honour. These lines are to request you to use your influence in persuading him to do so."

Mr. Black's long absence from Nova Scotia was a privation the societies were ill able, in their infant state, to sustain. Indications of spiritual declension in several places, on his return occasioned him great uneasiness. In Cumberland, especially, where he had witnessed such displays of the power of God, he now wept between the porch and the altar, to perceive the growing prevalence of laxity in attention to the means of grace, and of a wordly spirit ominous to the interests of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, in a portion of the work which, for obvious reasons, he had from the beginning regarded with the liveliest interest. Alluding to which, he observes,—“Matters are much worse here than when I left. The classes have not met; and many are cold and careless who were once as flames of fire. O Lord! revive thy work.”—The subject pressed heavily and constantly upon his mind; and in the hope that an affectionate pastoral remonstrance and exhortation by letter, might be attended with a happier effect than his personal admonitions produced, he addressed to them the following epistle,

* This refers to his previous appointment by Mr. Wesley.

replete with the most salutary warnings, and breathing all the spirit of care and tenderness of one who watched for their souls in the prospect of his final account. Though written in 1786, it is deemed more appropriate to introduce it in this connection.

“ *To the Methodist Society at Cumberland.*

—
“ HALIFAX, Aug. 15, 1786.

“ MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

“ What a necessary caution is that of the apostle—Rom. xii: 2. ‘*Be not conformed to this world.*’ There seems, at the present day, to be a sad declension amongst professors in general—little of the life and power of religion is to be found. Yes! though the world swarms with professors, I fear there are but few who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. How manifestly do those, of whom we would fain entertain the most favourable opinion, live beneath their privileges, and even wound, by their unwatchful conversation, the best cause in the world. The declension that has of late been so visible amongst us is easily accounted for:—There is too much conformity to the world in its spirit—maxims—and amusements.

“ 1. We have drank deeply into the *spirit* of the world. Religion, I grant, does not hinder us from being diligent in business. But then, it moderates our attachment to the things of time. It raises our affections to a better state. There is such a thing as going through all the cares and duties of life with a single reference to God’s glory; and when it is thus, we enjoy the most intimate union and communion with Him. But alas! who and where are the faithful few whose eye being single, have their whole souls filled with

light? In general the spirit of the world reigns in professors as well as profane; and though it is less conspicuous, equally powerful. It occupies their hearts—it dwells in their affections—it has damped the ardour of their first love—it has carried them away captive—it has shorn them of their strength, and given them over to the power of the Philistines. Let us examine ourselves. Have not we forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewn to ourselves cisterns that can hold no water? O how little do we live in the spirit of Christ! Our designs, desires, and ends, ought to be directed to the glory of God; but alas! how does self mingle with them all!

“2. The *maxims* of the world have gained too much influence over us. We fear man too much, many times even to the neglect of duty. There is too little of the fear of God in our hearts,—of the filial fear of offending him. With the world we too often put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. It is a general maxim with the world, that religion is an irksome, melancholy thing, calculated to abridge our pleasures. And is not this false maxim too much received amongst professors? It is true, indeed, our more enlightened judgments tell us that the ways of God are pleasantness and peace. Yet, do not our attachment to the creature, and our aversion to God and duty, seem to indicate that we have by experience found things otherwise than we expected? Why, if this be not the case, do we feel more aversion to spending an hour with God in private, than with man, yea, even with men who have no religion? While our judgments prefer scripture maxims, our affections prefer worldly ones.

“Lastly. The *amusements* and *diversions* of the world have insinuated themselves quite too much into our affections. What communion can that man have with God who delights in the empty, vain, foolish conversation and amusements of the world? I admit, religion does not require us to abstain from all connection with worldly persons, for then, as the apostle says, *we must go out of the world*; but it *does* require us to be holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. In this sense it enjoins, ‘Touch not—taste not—handle not.’ What concord hath Christ with Belial, light with darkness, or he that believeth with an infidel? No—it is impossible for a man to follow the amusements of the world, or relish its company and conversation, and grow in grace. Rather, he will esteem the saints the excellent ones of the earth, and in them will be all his delight.

“So far as the spirit, maxims, and amusements of the world have any share in our affections, so far the Spirit of God is quenched, the comforts of religion are withdrawn—the peace of our minds disturbed—our evidences beclouded—our confidence weakened—our unbelief strengthened—our corruptions nourished—our profession dishonoured—religion wounded—saints grieved—devils gladdened—while unwary souls stumble—perhaps into everlasting burnings.

“O brethren! I long much to hear how the Gospel prospers with you and *in* you. I have (blessed be the name of the Lord) experienced much of his kindness since I came here. Jesus seems lovely. I can say, it is good to be here. There is, I trust, a prospect of much good being done. Several are under deep awakenings. One or two profess to have found the Lord since I came here. Our congregations are larger

by three times the number than they were. Pray the Lord to make me faithful.

“ I am.

Your affectionate brother and servant, &c.

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

These faithful remonstrances are of more than local application, and lamentable to reflect, can scarcely ever be unseasonable. There is not a more insidious enemy of vital godliness than the world. Its objects constantly solicit our senses, and by their controul over our imaginations, are ever throwing around us a fascinating and deleterious influence. The world assails religion in the very citadel of its strength. It aims at the destruction of the universal element of true piety—a spirit of self-denial, of sacrifice, of surrender—by the seductions of sense and pleasure, or by the more splendid temptations of affluence and the pride of life. In following Christ, therefore, we must make our account with opposition. It must be met; and the panoply of our Redeemer's love is the only armour by which the antagonist power—the love of the world, can be overcome. May the victory be ours !

“ He justly claims us for his own
 Who bought us with ‘ a price :’
 The Christian lives to Christ alone—
 To Christ alone he dies.”

CHAPTER VII.

IMMORTAL FAME—STATE OF THE SOCIETIES AFTER MR. BLACK'S RETURN FROM THE UNITED STATES—REVIVAL AT HALIFAX—CONVERSION AND CHARACTER OF A. ANDERSON, A.M.—LETTER TO MR. WESLEY—MR. WESLEY'S ANSWER—LETTERS TO MR. GARRETTSON—FIRST DISTRICT CONFERENCE IN NOVA SCOTIA—REVIVAL AT HORTON—INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF ANTINOMIANISM—REFUTATION OF ANTINOMIANISM—SPIRITUAL LETTERS ;—TO LAWYER HILTON—TO MAJOR CRANE—TO J. N. SHANNON, ESQ.

USEFULNESS is the only material of immortal fame. The admired achievements of the warrior—the splendid retinue of gorgeous epithets that emblazon the names of statesmen—and the envied garland that decorates the brow of genius, are often the precursors of everlasting shame and contempt ; but “they that are wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.” Among these, the faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, though entirely unknown to worldly fame, will appear with distinguished and unfading lustre. His deeds, though witnessed with emotions of thrilling interest by angels, may be despised or forgotten by men ; and while of a nature the most substantially estimable, they may be susceptible of little embellishment. Nor

indeed, do they require it. The life of such an individual derives its chief interest from its exhibition of ministerial fidelity and success; and the best delineation of these is not the pompous declamation of eulogy, but a sober statement of facts. We shall therefore be excused for being so copious in our extracts from Mr. Black's Journal and correspondence, as we could in no other way so advantageously either portray his character, or consult the profit of the reader.

We have already stated that Mr. Black, on his return from the United States, found the societies suffering deeply under the paucity of the means of grace. We immediately find him, with a celerity that gave him a species of ubiquity, making a circuit again and again of almost the entire province. The following extracts from his Journal will convey an idea of his labours at this time :—

“Sunday, July 3d, 1785, I preached at Mr. Scott's, Windsor, twice. On Monday I rode to Horton and preached at the town—on Tuesday, at the Baptist meeting-house with peculiar freedom—on Wednesday at the Presbyterian meeting-house—on Thursday at Habitant—Saturday at Granville, and Sunday at Annapolis and Granville. But at none of those places are the people nearly so lively as they once were.

“From Annapolis I went to Digby. Many here seemed much engaged. I left in society about seventy-eight, of whom sixty-six were blacks. After spending a short time with them, I returned to Halifax, visiting on my way and preaching at Annapolis, Granville, Cornwallis, Horton, Falmouth and Windsor.

“Monday, September 5th, I attended the execution of two pirates, who were hung in chains on George's Island. For better than two weeks before I had at-

tended them almost every day. One of them, I trust, found peace with God the Sunday before his execution: the other died in great distress, calling for mercy. After they were thrown off, I addressed a few words of exhortation to the people."

In this month he visited, besides other parts, Liverpool and Shelburne; in both of which he saw the grace of God, and was glad. In the latter, especially, the cause was lifting up its head. "Many," he writes, "are enquiring, 'What must I do to be saved?' and many are rejoicing in God. I spent only one Sunday here; we held a love-feast, in which one or two were blessed with the peace of God. There is now a cheering prospect of much good being done here. Since brother Garretson came they have had a blessed revival. When I was here in April, 1784, there were two hundred and eighteen in society. When brother Cromwell came, he found about one hundred and twenty, some having returned to the world, and others removed. They are now increased to two hundred and twenty."

After spending the winter on the Cumberland circuit, uncheered by those wonted indications of success, without which he could not feel satisfied, but still with the conviction that his labours were not in vain in the Lord, he removed in the spring to Halifax. Fresh trials of faith and patience awaited him. The little society which he had left in the metropolis in the fall, was now scattered, and almost destroyed. He immediately formed a class of as many of them as felt a desire to speak one with another on the things of God. A few were, soon after, savingly converted and added to their number. The clouds now began to break, and the Sun of righteousness to irradiate his path. In the

month of August, the work assumed a still brighter aspect. The power of God manifestly rested on the congregation. Several, pierced to the heart, cried aloud in the meeting. Among these was Mr. Alexander Anderson, of the King's Dock Yard.—Mr. Anderson was a graduate of one of the Scottish universities, and even previous to his conversion, a man of inflexible integrity. Educated a Presbyterian, he had no predilection for either the doctrines or the economy of Methodism. But he was endowed with a strong and enquiring mind; and being, by a combination of providential circumstances, led to attend Mr. Black's preaching, it was blessed to his spiritual illumination and saving conversion to God. Immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood. Unpopular as Methodism then was in the community, and likely as an intimate and open association with it was to expose him to the charge of enthusiasm and imbecility, and to impede his promotion to a situation of greater emolument under government, he was not the man, for any temporal considerations, to suppress his convictions of truth, or falter in his allegiance to Christ. From the day his name was enrolled as a member of the society, to the day of his death, a period of nearly half a century, he was, emphatically, both as to strength and ornament, a *pillar in the church*. He officiated for many years as a leader and local preacher; and although his gifts in the pulpit were not of the most attractive kind, the veneration which his character inspired, always ensured him an attentive and respectful hearing. This "dear man of God, and pattern of piety," as Mr. Black justly characterizes him, after for a long series of years adorning the doctrine of God

his Saviour *in all things*, died as he had lived, feeling and proclaiming that "GOD IS LOVE!" *

Well knowing that information concerning the progress of the cause of God in Nova Scotia was at all times highly acceptable to Mr. Wesley, and that the intelligence he had now to communicate in reference to Halifax could not fail to afford him the most animated satisfaction, Mr. Black wrote him as follows:—

“ HALIFAX, Aug. 7, 1786.

“ REV. AND VERY DEAR SIR,

“ Since I came to Halifax, which is now between two and three months, I have enjoyed some very comfortable and refreshing times. When I came, I found the little society I had left here in the fall, almost all scattered. They had had but little preaching during the winter, for it was not in our power to supply all the places.

“ When I came down and found scarcely any society that met, it grieved me much. For some time very few attended preaching. However, I trust God has again begun to work. One or two have experienced remission of sins. Yesterday, several were crying in the bitterness of their souls, groaning for redemption. I trust the Lord will soon deliver them. Our congregations also increase fast. Last night, the room was nearly full. I do hope God is about to begin a good work among us. We have now thirty-two in society.

“ There has been a blessed work at Liverpool, the last winter, under brother Mann. This spring he went up the country as far as Windsor and Cornwallis, and

* Mr. Anderson, just before he died, in addressing his son, pronounced these words with deep emphasis.

there he believes he received the perfect love of God, or sanctification. I do myself sometimes feel longing desires after this blessing. But oh ! the self and pride, the corruption and unbelief, I feel within !—there is a fountain, a great deep. O Lord, avenge me of mine adversary ! O the stirrings of *self*. This it is, I fear, that pleases me so much when I have uncommon liberty in speaking, and causes shame when I have not that liberty, although perhaps I have heard of more good having been done in this case than in the former. One time in particular, before speaking, I trembled, every limb—my knees smote one against the other—every one I thought must see the hymn-book shake in my hands, and I was sorely tempted not to speak at all, till I was at last brought to this conclusion—‘ Well, and what if the Lord should shut up my mouth, and confound me before them, still I will attempt to speak ; this also may prove a blessing to me, and I will praise him for it.’ But never did I trust him and was confounded. O for faith to trust him for full salvation ! But I am too cold and easy without it. O pray for me, that God would make me faithful.

“At Horton the prospect is good.—A young man, one Grandine, has lately begun to preach, who I trust will be useful. He formerly belonged to the society in the Jerseys. He is now at Cumberland. Brother Cromwell is at Windsor, brother Garrettsen at Shelburne, and brother Mann at Liverpool. The other day I met two or three of our friends from Gibraltar ; it was a great comfort to me. What a pity they have not a preacher there.

“Since I began this letter, I am informed that one dropped down in the street yesterday as he was returning from meeting, and cried for mercy. He has

slept none all night, but remains in awful apprehensions of the wrath of God. A few minutes ago another came to me inquiring the way to Zion. There are serious impressions on the minds of many. I hope these are but the prelude to a future work. My dear Father,

“ I remain inviolably,

“ Your Son in the Gospel,

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

“ *Rev. J. Wesley, A. M.*

We subjoin the answer which the preceding letter elicited; in which Mr. Wesley refers to the steady progression by which the work of God had been, for many years, distinguished in Great Britain and Ireland, and encourages Mr. Black to pray for and expect, not merely occasional times of refreshing from on high, but a continuous effusion of divine influence :—

“ LONDON, NOV. 26, 1786.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ It is indeed matter of joy that our Lord is still carrying on his work throughout Great Britain and Ireland. In the time of Dr. Jonathan Edwards there were several gracious showers in New England; but there were large intermissions between one and another; whereas with us there has been no intermission at all for seven-and-forty years, but the work of God has been continually increasing.

“ The same thing I am in hopes you will now see in America likewise. See that you expect it, and that you seek it in his appointed ways, namely, with fasting and unintermitted prayer. And take care that you be not at all discouraged though you should not always have an immediate answer. You know

‘ His manner and his time are best.’

“Therefore pray always ! Pray and faint not. I commend you all to our Great Shepherd ; and am
 “ Your affectionate Brother,
 “ JOHN WESLEY.”

It is related of the celebrated Austin of Hippo, that being asked what was the first thing in religion, he said “ Humility ;” when asked what was the second, he replied, “ Humility ;” and what was the third, he still answered, “ Humility ;” in allusion to the striking definition which the Athenian orator is said to have given of eloquence. The deep humiliation with which Mr. Black constantly surveyed his spiritual attainments and remaining pollutions, cannot have escaped the notice of the reader. Humility was the predominating element in the composition of his religious experience ; and it arose in great part from an habitual tendency to contemplate his actual acquirements in piety, in contrast with the elevated standard of Christian holiness, to which he conceived it to be alike the privilege and the duty of all that named the name of Christ to aspire. His profound self-abasement, his deep prostration before God, and the holy jealousy with which he watched over his own heart, amid the auspicious tokens of the Divine benignity and power that attended his ministrations, are edifyingly exemplified in a letter written at this time.

To the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson.

—
 “ HALIFAX, Aug. 16, 1786.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ Last evening your letter came safe to hand. I am always glad to hear from you. Though your last

was not to me personally, it was to my other self: she will answer it. She often says she longs to see you, and expresses great love and regard for you, though known to her only by your letters. It gives me much pleasure to hear of the prospect at Barrington. I trust the Lord will ride prosperously to the conquest of his enemies there; and I cannot but hope that His majesty will be made known at Halifax, and such a fire kindled as all the powers of darkness will not be able to extinguish.—As to myself, I think at present I have many mercies and but few trials but what arise from my own heart. O for thankfulness and humility! I trust I do love the Lord, and feel in a measure happy in him; I think I can say, ‘He hath done all things well,’ and believe

‘Afflictions from his sovereign hand
Are blessings in disguise.’

“Help me to praise Him. I think, were not my heart so deeply ungrateful, I might praise him—

‘From morn till noon,—from noon to dewy eve.’

“But alas! what foul ingratitude I feel! You can scarcely imagine what a heap of contradictions I am. Sometimes, were you to hear me preach, you would suppose I was so taken up with the beauty of Jesus, that I could never live at such a distance from him as I do, or in an hour’s time lose sight of his charms. Brother! pray for me, an unfaithful servant. O! that God would destroy *all sin* in me. I find self would mingle with and spoil all I do. It follows me to the pulpit—to the closet, and even to the writing-desk. Yes! I find it this moment endeavouring to rise even by its degradation. But I fear I feel comparatively very little of the corruption that is yet latent in my

heart. O for a keener conviction of this dire infection! Is it not amazing that I should be proud, who have so much cause to lie prostrate in the dust? and yet, amazing as it may seem, I fear I am not clear of pride in telling you so. You will think I am a monster. I am so. I say it with tears. O! how little do I know of myself. However, Jesus is my trust; and in him will I hide myself until the indignation be overpast.

“I am, Dear Brother,

“Yours, &c. &c.

“WILLIAM BLACK.”

Anxious to cultivate the correspondence of one, of whose piety and judgment he entertained so exalted an opinion, he addressed another letter to the same honoured servant of the Lord Jesus, a few days subsequent to the date of the above, in which he requests his thoughts ‘on temptation,’ and suggests, as the topics on which he was particularly desirous to receive his sentiments—The Lord’s design in permitting his servants to be tempted—Satan’s in tempting them—and the most appropriate directions for those who are tempted. This request he accompanied with his own view in relation to the glorious privileges of the Christian believer, with no design or expectation, as he modestly intimates, of adding any thing to Mr. Garretson’s knowledge of that elevated subject, whose wisdom and experience he regarded as far superior to his own, but purely for the purpose of inducing his acquiescence in the request he had made, and of paving the way to a mutual interchange of their thoughts on the things of God. An extract from the letter may

interest and profit the reader :—"Our privileges as Christians, even in the present world, are inexpressibly great. Perhaps they may all be included in the following particulars :—1. A well grounded hope and comfortable assurance of our interest in Christ, which implies the knowledge of our pardon, acceptance, and adoption into the family of God, witnessed by the Spirit of God. We have received the Spirit of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. O my brother ! what a privilege is this, to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge ! 2. Communion with God in his ordinances. These are wells of salvation whence we draw all our consolation. And O what happiness do we derive through faith, from the word of God—public and private prayer—watching and fasting—meditation and Christian converse. When the Lord shines upon any of these, the wilderness and the solitary place is gladdened,—the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose,—the beauty of Carmel and Sharon are given unto it,—streams of grace and love, which make glad the city of God, issue from beneath the altar of burnt offering and incense, to refresh our souls. But alas ! what cause have I to mourn that my communion is so often intercepted, my comforts so transient, and my attainments so small. I would only mention one thing more ; namely, the unshaken confidence we are called to repose in the wisdom, goodness, power and faithfulness of God, in all his providential disposals. Nor is it one of the least privileges the Christian enjoys, to know assuredly that all things shall work together for his good. While *unerring wisdom* is at the helm of affairs, and overrules the minutest occurrences—while *irresistible power* with its matchless arm is en-

gaged in our defence—while *boundless goodness*, with its inexhaustible fulness is daily supplying our wants—while *inviolable faithfulness* is pledged to fulfil all the promises, which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, what has the believer to fear ? what may he not hope ? All this I believe to be the privilege of the Christian. It comforts, and yet it grieves me. O for grace to say in every circumstance of life, ‘ Father, thy will be done. Thou hast done all things well.’ ”

Hitherto, the labours of Mr. Black and his co-adjutors, though perfectly harmonious, had been desultory. They had, indeed, distributed the province into circuits, which, from the paucity of their numbers, were necessarily very extensive ; and to supply the spiritual wants of these, they laboured, amid the heat of summer and the rigours of winter, with almost incredible diligence and self-denial. But they now felt the need of a more perfect concentration of counsel, and of a more systematic plan of operation. The most effectual means of securing these important objects was, to follow the example of their brethren in England and the United States, by instituting an annual meeting for the purpose of deliberating on matters involving the temporalities as well as the spiritual interests of the church. The first Nova Scotia District Meeting, or as Mr. Black calls it ‘ Conference,’ was accordingly held at Halifax, in October, 1786. It commenced on the 10th and lasted four days. Its proceedings were characterized by unanimity and brotherly love. All were animated with the same spirit ; and receiving their appointments as emanating from divine Providence, repaired to their respective scenes of exertion in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. Mr. Black and Mr. Garrettson were ap-

pointed to the Halifax circuit which, besides the town, then embraced Annapolis, Granville, Digby, Horton and Windsor—a field of sufficient amplitude for the labours of eight or ten. “We had some very happy times,” says Mr. Black, “during the winter, especially at Horton, where there was a powerful awakening among the people. Fifteen witnessed a good confession; and I doubt not but more would have found the love of God, had it not been for the great opposition they received from the Antinomian Mystics. In Halifax town, several were under great distress, yet I know of none, who were on this occasion set at liberty, excepting Margaret McKenzie. She had heard a great deal said against the Methodists; and was determined as she passed the meeting one day, for once to go and hear for herself. I happened to be expounding the Lord’s prayer. The word reached her heart; she was convinced of her fallen state, and of the necessity of the new birth. Though exposed to great opposition and persecution, she restlessly sought after God, until she found redemption in Jesus’ blood; and is now a pious humble Christian.”

Those errors in religion which are distinguished by the epithet of *Antinomian*, might, with equal propriety, be designated *anti-evangelical*. The divine dispensations are intimately connected, and in perfect harmony; whatever, therefore, degrades the law of God, equally obscures the pure glories of the Gospel of God. Incorrect views of the one, are incompatible with just apprehensions of the other. The revelation of God is entire; and evils of a far deeper aspect than mere speculative delusion, are often the result of its mutilation. The perfect innocence of mental error, is indeed a topic upon which pretenders to unbounded

charity and liberality, delight to expatiate. Opinions, say they, are *but* opinions, and practically of trivial importance. 'We look not at the *creed*, but at the *life*.' Indeed! And may we be permitted with all becoming deference to ask these persons, whose expanded minds have swollen beyond the measure of the shackles of 'bigotry,'—'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' By what species of logic do they prove that there subsists no connection between the *creed* and the *life*? We had supposed that the truths of Revelation were not matters of human opinion, but facts divinely attested, demanding 'the obedience of *faith*' as imperatively as its moral precepts do righteousness of life; and we are weak enough to imagine that, apart from the intrinsic value of truth, and pre-eminently of *divine* truth, it exercises the most momentous influence upon the formation of our character, and consequently upon our eternal destiny. There are not wanting, indeed, accumulated evidences that such is the fact. What stronger practical demonstration is needed of the vast importance to be attached to religious sentiments, than their indisputable tendency, according to their obliquity or rectitude, to impede or to advance the work of God? In almost every instance of a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit, recorded in the preceding pages, we have seen the enemy endeavouring to render "the good seed" as unproductive as possible, by sowing among it the tares of false doctrine—and we regret to say with ominous success. It is perfectly obvious, that when errors in religious belief, that, by superseding the obligations, annihilate the sanctions of the law under which all believers are placed to Christ, are imbibed and maintained as essential parts of "the faith once delivered to the

saints," the practical consequences must be most disastrous. During the period of an overwhelming visitation of the power of the Holy Spirit, the legitimate influence of such 'vain speculations' may be in a great degree suppressed, because the mind, swept along by a sublime and unwonted influence, has then neither time nor inclination to think of aught but the absorbing interests of eternity. The germ of evil, however, though latent for a time, is deposited in soil too congenial with its unhallowed nature, and will, infallibly, in many instances, soon develope itself in various forms of iniquity, and in direct and determined hostility to that sacred cause, in favour of which, professedly, its zeal turns, and its energies are put forth. In consequence of the extent to which errors of this description infested many parts of Nova Scotia, at an early period of its settlement, Mr. Black was, from the commencement of his course, obliged to be constantly in armour for the defence of the Gospel. And his intimate acquaintance with the origin and progress of those errors, as well as the frequent occasions he had to mourn over their withering effects, eminently qualified him for this work. To Mr. Garrettson, his valued colleague, who had not been accustomed to this species of delusion, it presented a novel and mysterious aspect; and he requested Mr. Black to favour him with his views on the subject, in an argumentative form. This Mr. Black did in the following letter:—

To the Rev. F. Garrettson—Horton.

—
"HALIFAX, Feb. 14th, 1787.

"REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

"According to your desire and my promise, I now

send you my thoughts on the propositions you mention. You justly observe, as they are so zealously propagated through the province, they must certainly do much harm.

“1. It is affirmed, that ‘man has nothing at all to do; that if he lift a hand towards his own salvation, he will be damned?’ But is not this contrary to the words of St. Paul,—‘Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling.’ If indeed by ‘towards salvation,’ they meant, towards *purchasing* it, they would affirm nothing but the truth; but if they refer to our obtaining salvation, the assertion is utterly false. For though Christ has died for us, he has neither repented nor believed for us; still, therefore, if we repent not, we shall perish—if we believe not, we shall be damned. The Scriptures urge us to *turn, seek, knock, strive, wrestle, run*, &c. And is this, I would ask, doing nothing? absolutely *nothing*? Is it not for *salvation* that we are to seek, ask, wrestle and run? Does the sinner repent that he may perish, or believe that he may be damned? or rather does he not do both in order to salvation? Is not believing itself called a work?—‘This is the work of God that ye believe;’ and St. Paul says, ‘We have believed that we might be justified,’ that is plainly, in order to justification, and of course, to salvation. Shall we then be damned for attempting to stretch forth the withered hand, and touch the hem of his garment? Does not the Gospel call upon us to renounce our self-righteousness, to fly to Christ, and to lay hold on the hope set before us? And can any soul be saved without doing this? Does not Christ command us, if we would be his disciples to deny ourselves? Is the man in his proper senses who would affirm that all this is nothing?

“ 2. It is vehemently contended that ‘neither repentance nor prayer precedes the new birth.’ This also is contrary to the Scriptures.—With regard to *repentance*, John the Baptist thus opens his mission, ‘Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;’ and our Lord began to preach in the same words. Matt. iv : 17. The Apostles proclaim the same doctrine—‘Repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out.’—Now here repentance is put before forgiveness. Simon Magus was exhorted to repent. Acts viii : 20. ‘God commandeth all men every where to repent.’ Acts xvii : 30. Paul showed to both Jews and Gentiles that they should repent, and do works meet for repentance. Acts xxi : 20. But enough of this.—In relation to *prayer*, it may be observed,—Some well-meaning people, apprehensive lest sinners should put prayer in the place of the Saviour, have gone very unscriptural lengths ; and sometimes from the pulpit have said more against praying than against swearing. ‘No unconverted man,’ say they, ‘ought to pray ; it keeps him from Christ, and he will never be converted till he leaves off praying.’ I am really of opinion that many of those who speak thus, wish well to the cause of religion ; and seeing many rest in the bare form of prayer, and building on their self-righteousness, were, in order to avoid this rock, before they were aware, led into serious error ; and instead of opposing the *abuse*, have inveighed against the *use* of a precious ordinance of God. This clearly appears *from the nature of prayer*. Prayer is the desire of the heart made known to God, either mentally or by words. Having offered this short definition of prayer, I ask, can a man who sees himself under the curse of a broken law, and feels the wrath of God abiding on him, can he help

groaning, 'Who shall deliver me? Lord save or I perish!' Would it be his duty to suppress such prayers—to stifle such desires after the favour of God—the pardon of sin—the conversion of his soul, lest he should not come to Christ so soon, or lest he should make a Saviour of prayer. Is there not another and a more excellent way of speaking against self-righteousness, than by opposing prayer? Heartless forms, I am aware, are an abomination unto the Lord, but not the earnest groans of the broken and contrite heart. *From the obligations to pray.*—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near—Call upon me in the day of trouble—If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God—Is any afflicted, let him pray.—To mention only one passage more,—the apostle exhorts Simon Magus to repent, and *pray* God, if perhaps, the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him. Can there be a stronger demonstration of the propriety and necessity of prayer in an unregenerate sinner than this? That he was an unconverted man, none can deny; and yet the apostle exhorts him both to *repent* and *pray*. This, surely, is a sufficient precedent for any minister. *From the promises made to prayer,*—as, 'Seek, and ye shall find,' 'Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' *From the answers to prayer recorded in Scripture.*—Jacob wrestled until he obtained the blessing. Manasseh prayed, and was delivered, though such a monster of wickedness before. The publican's prayer was heard; and he went down to his house justified. Bartimeus did not cry in vain, 'Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!' Saul arose and washed away his sins, 'calling on the name of the Lord Jesus.' Cornelius' prayers as well as his alms came up in me-

morial before God. These, among many other considerations, evince that it is the duty of all who desire to be found of God in peace, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving to make known their requests unto him.

“3. An extremely dangerous notion has of late been received by many, respecting sin in believers. Those born of God are said to be *dead unto sin* and *alive unto God*. They are no longer slaves unto sin that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, but *new creatures* in Christ Jesus. But we are told that true faith may not only exist *without good* works, but that it may consist *with the most diabolical* works of *darkness*—that a man may be a drunkard, an adulterer, and even a murderer, without forfeiting his title to the favour of God. One told me, the other day, that if he were to live in the forementioned vices, from that day till the day of his death, his title to heaven would remain secure, nor would he be a whit the less a child of God, than when walking in the obedience of love. ‘It is true,’ said he, ‘I do not wish to do so. If I were, it would becloud my evidences.’ Yes, replied I, and forfeit your title too; for ‘faith without works is dead,’ and ‘when the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.’ But it is vain to reason with such persons. Press them with the *Law*, and they cry ‘Moses is dead—we have nothing to do with the law.’ Have they forgotten what our Lord says, or do they think him as blind and legal as a Methodist.—‘Think not’

says he, 'that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets : I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven : but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' Do they imagine St. Paul was mistaken when he said, 'We are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ?'—Press them with the *Gospel*, tell them with the apostle that 'they that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God,' another subterfuge is at hand. 'O, 'tis only the body that sins—the soul cannot sin.' By this absurd distinction they open the flood-gates of iniquity, and by a single stroke, make void both the Law, and the Gospel. According to this view, the body can act without the soul; Christ may command the soul, and the devil the body; grace may reign in the soul, and sin in the body. But the apostle declares,—'Sin shall not reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof : sin shall not have dominion over you.'

"One of their teachers on a certain occasion illustrated his sentiment by this (beautiful ?) simile—'A believer,' said he, 'is like a nut; it may fall into the mud, but the kernel will not be in the least defiled.' What a dreadful insinuation is here; for mark the explication :—'Though we sin with the body, the soul remains pure and undefiled.'

"I also heard another of their teachers affirm that, 'a man might live in adultery and murder ten months together, and yet be a child of God—a man after

God's own heart—that his soul might never sin all that time.' To prove this, he produced the case of David. That noble testimony concerning David, they forget, was not given when he was covered with the guilt of uncleanness and blood. Nor can they ever prove that David was 'a man after God's own heart' when he perpetrated those evil deeds, unless they can make it appear that the holy God delights in murder and adultery; that he forbid David to do the thing he willed he should do; that he reproved him for fulfilling his will; and that he punished him severely, inwardly and outwardly, in his person and in his family, for accomplishing his will and pleasure.

"After all, I cannot but form a favourable judgment of many who hold these unscriptural tenets. I believe many of them would shudder at the thought of reducing them to practice. Many of them, I doubt not, are real lovers of Jesus. I desire always to distinguish between a man and his opinions. You may make of this letter what use you think proper.

"Yours, &c.

"WILLIAM BLACK."

While Mr. Black lost no opportunity of offering the most effectual counteraction in his power, to those forms of error that prevailed around him, and in his personal exertions for the good of his people, combined in an eminent degree the assiduity of the pastor with the zeal of the preacher, his pen was often employed as the medium of affectionate and faithful communication with individuals in whose salvation he felt an animated interest. There are persons of reputation attached to the interests of every spiritual community, who, amidst all their exhibition of a

friendly and liberal spirit, yet lack one thing. When any object of public utility, connected with the church, is set on foot, as the erection or enlargement of a place of worship, or the more respectable maintenance of the ministry established among them, they are often among the most active in promoting it; and their handsome contributions not unfrequently shame the niggardly dolings of some members of the church, whose parsimonious hearts the love of Christ even, cannot teach to devise liberal things. Yet they want religious decision. Such characters awaken a tender sympathy in the bosom of the grateful minister: he cannot but earnestly wish and devoutly pray that they were not only almost but altogether persuaded to be Christians. The following letters emanated from this holy and benignant solicitude:—The first is to Lawyer Hilton of Cornwallis.

“HALIFAX, Feb. 10th, 1787.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“The concern I feel for your soul now induces me to take up my quill. The soul is of vast importance. Nothing under heaven is comparable to it in value. Words cannot describe its worth. The *blood of Christ* with which it was purchased is the strongest demonstration of this. And then, it must exist forever, either in the nearest union and most delightful communion with God in heaven, or in the doleful regions of everlasting death, darkness and despair. And are we probationers for ETERNITY! Then how important every hour! how valuable every moment! The Lord prepare us for a happy exit! The thought should hush every ruder passion; but need not discourage us; for the word of God affords us great encou-

ragement; and the experience of his people testifies its truth.—‘Seek and ye shall find,’ said incarnate Truth Himself. But *what* shall we seek? *how* shall we seek? *where* shall we seek? and *when* shall we seek?

“1. *What* shall we seek? Were worldly men to answer this question, they would say, ‘Seek a large estate,—splendid buildings—elegant furniture—abundance of riches.’ If men of pleasure,—‘Seek rich cordials—lordly dishes—luscious wines—jovial companions, &c. &c.’ If men of honor—‘Seek earthly glory—illustrious titles—sounding names—nor be satisfied till every Mordecai bows to you at the gate, and you have secured not only the title of *honourable* and *right honourable*, but if possible that of *sovereign majesty*. But I point you to a more substantial good, namely, the *all sufficient God*. ‘Seek ye me; and ye shall live’ (Amos. iv : 5.) We must seek his *favour*.—It was the folly of the Jews that they sought the favour and honour of men more than the favour and honour of God. Therefore Christ said to them, ‘How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only.’ ‘In his favour,’ says David, ‘is life.’ Happy indeed are they who are the objects of the divine favour, who are accepted in the Beloved, whose sins are all forgiven, and who are savingly interested in the blood of Jesus Christ.

“We must seek his *counsel*.—‘Lean not to your own understanding, but trust in the Lord.’ Say with the psalmist, ‘Lord, what I know not, teach thou me.’ O make his testimonies the man of your counsel. Pray that he would open to you the mysteries of his word, and loose for you its seals. None can teach like the Spirit of God. ‘Wo unto them that take counsel,

but not of me, saith the Lord.' We must seek the *constant manifestations of his love* to our hearts.—This is a choice privilege, peculiar to the people of God. They alone know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. They alone feel it shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them. And this is, indeed, a pearl of great price. It is the essence of heavenly felicity, more precious than rubies; and all the things that can be desired are not to be compared to divine *Love*. It is stronger than death; many waters cannot quench it. We must seek his *image*.—Every Christian bears the image of God. 'If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new.' New hopes—new fears—new joys and sorrows—new desires and aversions. He *loves* what once he *hated*—and *hates* what he once *loved*. And this change is absolutely necessary to constitute a Christian. We must seek his *consolations*.—Religion is not the melancholy thing it is too generally supposed to be. 'The joy of the Lord is' the believer's 'strength.' 'Believing, we rejoice with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory.' O seek 'the kingdom of God,' which is 'righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost,' until you know and feel that it is *within* you. 'The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple;' and 'in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts will delight your soul.' We must seek an habitual *readiness for death*.—We know not at what hour the summons may be put into our hands. 'Be ye therefore ready also.' The Judge is at the door. There is no time to delay. In the twinkling of an eye God may say unto us, 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.'

But *how* shall we seek ? Not *carelessly*.—‘ Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able :’ we must *strive*. ‘ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my father who is in heaven.’ Not *occasionally*.—The reason why many who seek do not find him is, because they only seek now and then. Sometimes while hearing or reading the word they are affected ; and then they pray and resolve ; but their impressions soon vanish away ; for want of a deeper and more abiding conviction, their resolutions are soon forgotten ; and they remain without hope, and without God in the world. Not *self-righteously*.—‘ If a man strive, yet is he not crowned unless he strive lawfully. ‘ Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.’ O Sir ! bring nothing with you to procure the favour of God. It is received by *faith*, without money and without price. Plead nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, as the meritorious ground of justification.

“ Seek the Lord *fervently*.—Let all the powers of your soul cry out after God ; and you shall surely find him. O strive, that is, *agonize* to enter in at the strait gate. ‘ He is the rewarder of all that diligently seek him. *Constantly*.—Let not a moment pass in which a courier is not sent with a memorial to the throne of grace. Jesus ‘ spake a parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.’ O never cease to cry till the Lord in mercy reveals his Son in your

heart, and graciously delivers your soul. ' Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him ? Verily, I say unto you, He will avenge them speedily.' *Humbly*.—Come as a poor, helpless, guilty, miserable, forlorn, undone creature. Cry as the lepers under the law—Unclean, unclean. Nor fear to come as a guilty, depraved sinner ; for he delights to show mercy. He is the only physician of the soul. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. O, prostrate yourself before him. Cry, ' If I perish, I perish at thy footstool, crying with my latest breath. God be merciful to me a sinner !' *Believingly*.—Nothing but unbelief can hinder your success. Remember, it shall be done unto you *according to your faith*. ' To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.' ' Faithful is he that hath promised ; he also will do it.' When you retire to your closet, go in the full expectation of then and there meeting the Lord. Say, ' Lord, open to me the door of thy grace,—behold ! I open the door of my heart to thee. I am come to throw myself before thy mercy seat : O shine forth from between the cherubim ! O lift up the light of thy countenance upon me ! Cause thy face to shine upon me ; and I shall be saved ! O remember the word upon which thou hast caused me to trust. Lord, I believe ; help thou mine unbelief.'

' With thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day'.

" But my sheet is exhausted.

" I am, with great sincerity,

" Your Servant for Christ's sake,

" WILLIAM BLACK."

To Major Crane, of Horton.

—
“HALIFAX, Feb. 12th, 1787.

“DEAR SIR,

“Your’s I received. Mr. Anderson will write to your brother, and send the piece you mention. I thank you for proposing such a thing. Do all you can to spread them. O, Mr. Crane, make sure of heaven. By no means rest till you find rest in Christ Jesus. Refuse all comfort till he himself comfort you. I long to hear of your being brought into the liberty of the children of God. Your kindness to us as ministers of Jesus Christ, and the respect you manifest for the Gospel, naturally make us care for, and esteem you. But one thing is still wanting, which is, *Christ in you the hope of glory*. This, Sir, would crown all; and our joy in this respect would be full.—To see you rejoicing in the love of Jesus; going in and out before the people in the spirit and power of Jesus Christ.

“Speaking of magistrates, the psalmist says, ‘I have said, Ye are Gods,’ that is, Ye are God’s representatives, Ye have received a delegated power from God; and in his name and spirit, ye ought to act. Magistrates, as *ministers of justice*, and preachers of the Gospel, as *ministers of mercy*, ought to be as guardian angels, watching over the civil and religious interests of the people. As our stations are more eminent, and our influence greater in proportion, our lives ought to be more holy. What a blessing you might be to those around you, were you rich in grace, and a bright example of divine love! From my last visit, I cannot but think, God has done, and is about to do great things for Horton. O, may Jesus ride on from conquering to conquer! Things here are

just as when I left them. Mrs. Black joins in love to you and sister Crane, with all friends.

“ I am, Dear Sir,

“ Your Servant for Christ's sake,

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

Jonathan Crane, Esq., for many years a Colonel in the Militia, a magistrate, and a member of the Provincial Parliament, evinced through life an unabated interest in the prosperity of the Methodist church; but never, I believe, became a member of it. To his noble-minded liberality the society is chiefly indebted for their handsome and commodious chapel in Lower Horton, which he only just lived to see completed. How deeply is it to be regretted, that characters in almost all respects so estimable, and who withal love ‘ the habitation of God's house, and the place where his honour dwelleth,’ should live short of the reception and profession of that faith which worketh by love and purifieth the heart. Short of it, however, through the mercy of God, Mr. Crane did not *die*. In his last affliction he was led to seek God with the whole heart. Ere the shadows of death gathered around him, a light was kindled in his soul, that enabled him to tread the dreaded vale with joyful and unsuspecting confidence in the God of his salvation. His dying testimony to the mercy and grace of God, in Christ Jesus, was explicit and scriptural; and has been a source of the richest solace to his children, and especially to his venerable relict, whose holy life, and godly conversation, have long rendered her a distinguished ornament of the Methodist Society.

We add a letter written the same day, to James Noble Shannon, Esq., who married a sister of Mr.

Crane. He then resided at Horton ; and afterwards, for many years previous to his death, at Parrsboro.' While memory continues to perform its office, or the last spark of gratitude remains unextinguished in his breast, the compiler of these pages can never forget the parental kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Shannon, when in the seventeenth year of his age, he laboured on the Parrsboro' circuit. And he feels a mournful and conscious pleasure, at the distance of near as many more years since that period, while they are slumbering in the grave, to record this grateful tribute to the memory of departed excellence. The end of both was peace. Mr. Shannon was naturally of a very diffident mind—prone to look at his own heart, till humiliation degenerated into despondence. In consequence, although he constantly walked in the *fear of God*, he seldom enjoyed a large share of the *comfort of the Holy Ghost*. This peculiarity, from which he was the greatest sufferer, was rather constitutional than moral. From the commencement of his religious course, it would seem from Mr. Black's letter, he was tempted to dejection, from a humiliating estimate of his spiritual deficiencies :—

“ HALIFAX, Feb. 12th, 1787.

“ DEAR FRIEND,

“ I cannot but hope the Lord is about to reveal himself to you. I am glad that you are in some measure sensible of the corruption of your heart, and of the danger of settling down in the bare *form* of religion without the *power*. It has been the ruin of thousands to do so. Heaven forbid it should ever be yours. If you feel the corruption and hardness of your heart a burden to you, let not that discourage you, but rather

Thank God that he has made the discovery to you. Oh ! fly with all your complaints to Jesus. He has promised to take away *the heart of stone*, and give you *a heart of flesh*. Only, he will be enquired of, to do these things for us. O, Sir ! beware of trifling with convictions. Besiege the throne of grace with all the power of prayer. Nor rest in externals : pursue the end of prayer,—union and communion with God in Christ. O, seek his face continually. ‘ Seek ye me ; and ye shall live,’ said the Lord—*shall live !* yes, a life of faith, of love, of holiness, of comfort, and of glory. O what a mercy it is, that the Lord should regard such worthless worms ; and offer life and salvation to us without money or without price ! I hope yet to see you rejoicing in the Lord, and hear you say with David, ‘ Come and hear, all ye that fear God ; and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.’—My kindest respects to Mrs. Shannon. May the Sun of Righteousness arise, and shine brightly upon her soul !

“ I am, with great sincerity,

“ Your servant in the Gospel.

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. BLACK'S COLLEAGUE, MR. GARRETTSON, LEAVES NOVA SCOTIA—CONVERSION OF AN ATROCIOUS SINNER—DR. COKE APPOINTED TO VISIT NOVA SCOTIA—LETTER FROM THE DR.—LETTER FROM MR. WESLEY—MR. BLACK WRITES MR. WESLEY—THE DEVIL'S COUNSEL TO HIS CHILDREN, AN INGENIOUS PRODUCTION—SERIOUS RELIGION PROGRESSIVE IN HALIFAX—MR. BLACK'S CONSTANT REGARD, AMID HIS LABOURS, TO THE STATE OF HIS OWN HEART—ANIMADVERSIONS ON A SERMON—BEST WAY OF OPPOSING HETERODOX TEACHERS—LETTER TO JOHN BLACK, ESQ. ON HIS BEGINNING TO PREACH—HIS EXCELLENT CHARACTER—LETTER TO MR. GRANDINE ON MARRIAGE—SECOND NOVA SCOTIA CONFERENCE—MEMORABLE REVIVAL IN VIRGINIA—LETTER TO THE SOCIETY IN HALIFAX.

On the first of April 1787, Mr. Garrettsen sailed for Boston, in order to attend the ensuing Conference at Baltimore, undecided whether he should subsequently return to Nova Scotia, or not. Mr. Black felt deeply in parting with a colleague, whom he so highly esteemed, not merely on account of the personal pleasure and benefit he had derived from his friendship, but from an apprehension of the serious loss the cause of God was likely to sustain from his absence. The

confidence he reposed in Mr. Garrettson's established piety and matured judgment, had materially alleviated the weight of his responsibility ; but it might now be said of him, that the care of all the churches came upon him daily. The charge of the whole circuit devolving upon him at the same time, of necessity greatly augmented his labours. "For some time," he says, "I had about one hundred and forty miles to ride in the country, on the week days, besides preaching in the town regularly, every sabbath. But the Lord strengthened me to perform my journeys, and many flocked out to hear."

The conversion of a single individual, whose remorseless audacity in the service of the devil has been matter of general notoriety, often attracts more attention than that of scores, in whose exterior deportment the change is less conspicuous. And it is a melancholy proof of the enmity of the unregenerate mind against God, that the accession of so signal a trophy to the victories of the cross—which animates the minister of Jesus in his work, and diffuses exhilaration through the bosom of the church—should rouse the demon of fury and persecution in those who find themselves suddenly abandoned by their former leader in crime. A signal instance of this kind is recorded by Mr. Black, under date of May 6th in this year :—
"While I was preaching in the morning, Mark Smith, a soldier, one of the vilest men in all the regiment, was struck under deep convictions. He immediately relinquished his ungodly courses, and with earnest cries and tears, sought and obtained the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. At first he met with great persecution ; and was sometimes assailed with blows that laid him prostrate on the

ground. But God has now restrained his enemies. He appears a wonder, yea a miracle, to all who are acquainted with him in the regiment. The Lord preserve him blameless to the day of his coming !”

The growing importance of Nova Scotia as a promising field for evangelical enterprise had of late more especially engaged Mr. Wesley’s attention ; and in accordance with Mr. Black’s request, Dr. Coke, who had for some time acted as the *ambassador* of Methodism abroad, while its venerable founder laboured with untiring energy in the domestic department, was appointed to visit the province, and afford Mr. Black the advantage of his counsel and influence in promoting the stability and extension of the work in which he had been, and still was, the prominent instrument. This arrangement being formed, the Dr. hastened to apprise Mr. Black of it by the following letter :—

“LONDON, January 5, 1786.

“MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

“I thank you for your letter. At the latter end of this year I hope, God willing, to see you. Let all your strength be employed for God. He deserves all you are, and all you have. Though unknown to most of my dear brethren in Nova Scotia, I do not forget them in my prayers. Remember me in your’s often and fervently in return. I bless God we have a considerable revival in many parts of England, and throughout Ireland ; and even poor barren Scotland, begins, I trust, to lift up its head. Exercise much private prayer, my dear brother, and the Lord will use you much for his glory : and surely there is nothing else worth living for. It is an honour to have any thing to do in the great work which God is carry-

ing on, on the face of the earth. Give my affectionate love to your wife. Keep humble, and God will exalt you. I have written to you in brother Marchington's letter, to save postage. I trust you have a just value for our excellent discipline.

"I am with sincerity,

"Your very affectionate friend and brother,

"THOMAS COKE."

The Dr. sailed from England late in the fall; and after a stormy passage nearly across the Atlantic, eventually failed to reach his place of intended destination; and was driven by unfavourable and tempestuous winds to the West Indies. Mr. Wesley, not hearing of the Dr. for upwards of four months after his departure, became greatly concerned for his safety, especially as the weather had been so inclement, and the vessel in which he embarked was so miserably conditioned. These apprehensions he expresses in a letter to Mr. Black, dated,—

"LONDON, Feb. 20, 1787.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"After various unfortunate hindrances and delays, Dr. Coke embarked on board a small brig, in the middle of October, and was, by furious winds, twice beat back into the harbour. They set sail a third time, with a crazy, shattered vessel, on the eighteenth of October. We have not heard any thing either from him or of him since. I hope you have heard of him in America.

"You have great reason to be thankful to God for the progress of his work in Nova Scotia. This is far from being the case in Newfoundland, where poor

John McGeary appears to be utterly discouraged ; not only through the want of success, but through want of the conveniencies, yea, necessaries of life. Truly, if I could have supposed, that those who made me fair promises, would have suffered a preacher to want bread, I should have sent him into other parts, where he would have wanted nothing.

“ I hear very different accounts here of the state of your provinces. Is there plenty or scarcity in Nova Scotia, and New England ? How does it fare with Halifax and Shelburne in particular ? Do the buildings and the people increase or decrease ? Public accounts I cannot at all depend upon ; but upon *your* word I can depend. Peace be with all your spirits !

“ I am,

“ Dear Billy.

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

In the expectation and hope of the Doctor's previous arrival, the brethren postponed their first District Meeting, till the approach of winter made it inexpedient for them to defer it any longer. But their meeting, we have seen, had closed before he sailed from England. Great, we may well imagine, was their disappointment on finding their cherished anticipations cut off ; but their recognition of the finger of God in the matter suppressed every murmur ; and their grief on their own account was merged in their gratitude to God for the Doctor's merciful preservation. In reply to the above, Mr. Black, having in the mean time received information concerning the Dr., immediately wrote Mr. Wesley on the subject, laying before him, at the same time, a succinct account of

the state and prospects of the work of God in Nova Scotia :—

“ HALIFAX, April 27, 1787.

“ REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“ Dr. Coke came within three days sail of this province, and was then driven off the coast to the West Indies. After visiting Antigua, St. Vincent's, St. Kitts and St. Eustatius, he sailed for Charleston, S. C., leaving the preachers designed for this province in the Islands.

“ Brother Garretson is gone to meet him at the Baltimore Conference. The work of the Lord has continued to spread in this part of the vineyard since my last.—At Liverpool there has been an astonishing outpouring of the spirit. Nine were set at liberty at one meeting. Of forty who joined society in a few weeks, seventeen profess faith. I do not know any part of the province in which the work of God has gone on, as in this place, with so little declension for six years or more. The manners of the people are entirely changed. If the work spreads as rapidly as it has done, much longer, almost all in the place will be brought in. Brother John Mann has been with them all this winter. The people seem all on fire for God, especially the young people, and exhort all they see to make their peace with God. At Barrington, the work is also going on : about fifteen more profess to have found the Lord. At Horton, also, about the same number. Brother Garretson and I have laboured alternately in the town and country during the winter. About six weeks ago, (the last time but one I was there,) I preached at Horton from—‘ Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.’ One young woman

came into the meeting laughing : but the power of God soon carried the word to her heart. It was sharper than a two-edged sword. She went home weary and heavy laden. This happened on Wednesday afternoon. When night came, she was afraid to go to sleep, lest she should awake in hell. All the next day she remained in great distress. O how dreadful were her feelings when she saw the sun go down—to think—‘ another sun is setting, and I am still in my sins, unconverted, and out of Christ. Perhaps this will be the last setting sun I shall ever see.’ Her distress increased, becoming greater the nearer her deliverance approached. On Friday night the Lord filled her with peace and joy. Such was her agony of mind a short time before she experienced salvation, that she was deprived of her reason. But her extremity was God’s opportunity. And then, O how did she exult in her Redeemer ! and exhort her parents and all that were in the house, to seek God, declaring what great things he had done for her soul !

At Halifax the work has not advanced much lately. I know of only one who has found the Lord since I last wrote.—Our congregations are larger than ever. O that God would begin a powerful work here ! The society still remains small. But surely so much seed is not sown in vain. To Cumberland, Annapolis, Digby, and the whole province of New Brunswick, we can at present give no assistance, for want of Preachers. I wish brother McGeary was here instead of being at Newfoundland ; he would meet with a very different reception. We have just got our new preaching-house up. I preached in it for the first time on Easter Sunday.

“This town is much divided in religious matters. There is one large English Church—one small Dutch Church—one Presbyterian meeting house—one Roman Catholic Chapel, besides a small society of Quakers—one of Sandemanians, and one of the followers of Swedenborg, together with a few of Lady Huntington’s society, and a great swarm of *Infidels*.

“I am, Rev. and Dear Sir,

“Your Son in the Gospel,

“WILLIAM BLACK.”

It is among the momentous facts inscrutable to human investigation, which the Bible discloses, that there exist evil spirits, who once shone before the throne of God in all the splendours of unsullied purity. This fact claims our assent, not on the ground of philosophy,—by which it could never have been explored, and by which, now that it is revealed, it can never be impugned,—but as an article of intelligence emanating from a supernatural source ; and interwoven as it is with the whole texture of the sacred history, fraught with practical consequences of the utmost magnitude and importance. Under the auspices of Satan, the chief of those apostate angels, sin, we are informed, was introduced into the world ; and so deep and broad has he laid the foundations of his empire, so fearful the ascendancy he has wielded over all the generations of men from age to age, that he is designated in Scripture “the god of this world—the prince of the power of the air.” His power over the human mind, acquired in the first instance by deception, is still maintained and perpetuated by means of the same weapon. To fortify the strong holds of superstition, idolatry, and atheism, where the Gospel is not, and to “blind

the minds of them that believe not" where it is, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ should shine unto them," are objects which he keeps steadily in view, and for the accomplishment of which the range and comprehension of his intellect, combined with unmixed malignity, awfully qualify him. Thousands who value themselves on their mental superiority, are duped by his artifice; and while they boast liberty, resemble the maniac dancing in his chains. The benevolence of infidels often expresses itself in whining commiseration for those who are silly enough to credit the word of God, and prepare to meet him. But let them reserve their pity for themselves. Limited indeed are the views of the Christian who is ignorant of the devices by which *they* suffer themselves to be imposed upon—who cannot disentangle the sophistry which *they* mistake for demonstration.

These observations have been suggested by the following singular and ingenious production of Mr. Black's pen, composed at the period of his life now under record, in which with the hand of a master, he exposes the machinations wherewith the great adversary of souls flatters the pride, foment the unhallowed propensities, and freely administers opiates to the consciences of sceptics and infidels, in order that he may lead them captive at his will. The occasional and judicious use of irony for the purpose of repelling the assailants of our faith, or of giving confidence to its adherents, is quite consistent with the majesty of truth: the infidel, at all events, has no just ground to demur, if he find himself humiliated by a weapon with which he has often vaunted his ability to rout the armies of the living God.

BEELZEBUB TO HIS LIEGE SUBJECTS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HALIFAX.

“ WELL-BELOVED AND TRUSTY FRIENDS,

“ I embrace this opportunity of acknowledging your faithfulness to my interest. You are, indeed, my loyal subjects ; and have hitherto maintained your ground against all the remonstrances of conscience, the dictates of reason, and the calls of Scripture. You are true Mussulmen—steadfast believers in that form of sound words which I have committed unto you. Be faithful unto death, and I will reward you.

The Scriptures are a mere artful contrivance of men, designed to keep the vulgar in awe. Jesus Christ was a specious impostor ; and his followers a set of melancholy enthusiasts. The religion of the Bible is a system of restraint—a burden—a yoke intolerable to be borne. Reject it, O my children ! Believe it not, O ye trembling Felixes ! and thou unstable Agrippa ! why art thou almost persuaded to be a Christian—a thing so inconsistent with thy happiness ? Christianity requires you to deny yourselves, to take up your cross, to forsake your most pleasurable sins, and denounces damnation on your heads, if you refuse obedience. It declares that you must forsake your gay and jovial companions, who make a mock of sin, and sport with the tremendous name of the Great Supreme. It says that God marks even what you say, and that he will not hold you guiltless when you take his name in vain, though it be done merely from habit. It avers that the companion of fools shall be destroyed. Nay, it even goes so far as to say that you, my trusty servants, must become fools that you may be wise, must be converted, and become as little children, be born again of the Spirit of God, created anew in Christ

Jesus, be made inwardly holy, or you never can be happy in time or in eternity. But care ye for none of these things. Gratify the passions which God hath given you. Had he not designed you should gratify them, he would not have planted them in your nature : therefore fear not great flock ! it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom ; and where he is, there shall also his servants be. Give the rein to all your desires. Keep not your feet from evil ; nor your tongue from speaking guile ; neither be in the least terrified at your adversaries, for YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE !

“ Arm yourselves, O my trusty servants, with all the armour of darkness, on the right hand, and on the left. Put on the helmet of presumptuous hope—the breastplate of unrighteousness—the sword of my spirit, which is my word, and let your feet be shod with the preparation of my Gospel. Let falsehood be the girdle of your loins ; but above all, take the shield of unbelief, wherewith you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the holy one. At times, O my children, you feel depression of spirits—consciousness of guilt—fear of death—dread of judgment, and terror of hell. But O fear not ! Drive such thoughts away from you ; suffer them not to prey upon your minds, and disturb your repose. They will induce melancholy, and it may be, bring upon you the opprobrious name of enthusiast, fanatic, or Methodist. If such thoughts should at any time irresistibly obtrude themselves, and interrupt your quiet, be advised by me, my children, not to resort to those cowards who have fled from my banners, and enlisted under Emmanuel ; for evil communications corrupt good manners. Besides, their malady is as contagious as the plague.

“ Meddle not with that antiquated book, the Bible. It is a legend consisting of old Jewish fables, and unaccountable mysteries. It would fain make you believe, that, *three are one*, and a child, the mighty God. If you look into it at all, let it be only to beguile a tedious hour on the sabbath, when conscience will not permit you to read a play or a romance. And when you do at any time read it, beware of applying any part of it to your own state of mind, which would be a sure way to disturb your peace. When you meet with any case of unfaithfulness in a professor of religion recorded there, mark the baseness of his fall, but take no notice of his repentance. If there appears any thing equivocal in what you read, always attach that meaning to it which is most pleasing to the flesh. Those parts of scripture which treat of regeneration, repentance, faith and holiness, I advise you to pass by ; especially Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, and his dialogue with Nicodemus. Apply all the promises to yourselves ; but, pay no regard to the threatenings.

“ I warn you not to attend those Meetings or Churches where the ministers insist upon the necessity of *inward religion*, or the *new birth*. If you hear any, select those downy doctors who prophesy smooth things to the people, and tell them *all is well*. If there be such a place as heaven, do not imagine that it is necessary in order to arrive there, to enter in at the straight gate of conversion, or to walk in a narrow way : a little heathen morality will answer every purpose.

“ Pursue the honours and riches of the world, and that ardently, resolutely, constantly—and its pleasures too. These will be of great service in shielding your minds against the gloomy impressions of religion.

'Think not there is any harm in killing a few hours ; you have long to live yet ; it is too soon to think of dying. What imaginable harm *can* there be in attending balls, masquerades, plays, or operas. No, No, my sons ! these will divert your minds from those melancholy subjects—Death, Judgment, Hell and Eternity. Is there any thing irrational in such innocent amusements ; or what if, after being involved during the day in the cares of business, you should relax your minds in the evening by a game at cards. Is this beneath the dignity of an intelligent being ? Send round the merry glass at the club, or quaff the cheerful bowl at the tavern, to drive away dull care.

“ Further, my children, let me counsel you to read plays, novels, histories, or any thing of that kind that may come to hand, calculated to amuse the mind and dissipate all anxious concern about a future state. Particularly I recommend to your attentive perusal the works of Voltaire, with those of Hobbs and Rochester ; only add not the dying recantation of the last, for he turned coward when death stared him in the face. Voltaire my servant has done me much service. He employed all his skill and talent in support of my cause. He shall in no wise lose his reward. Nor you, my faithful servants, provided you only remain faithful unto death.

“ If Emmanuel, my sworn enemy, knock at your door,—and I know he will—give him no admittance ; despise his word ; quench his Spirit ; listen not to the voice of his servants.

“ From your Royal Sovereign,

“ *DIABOLOS,*

“ *alias*

“ *BEELZEBUR.*”

Amidst the multifarious forms of Christianity that existed in Halifax at the time Mr. Black penned the animated article now presented to the reader, it is hardly to be imagined that the principles it assails prevailed to any great extent. As public sentiment, however, had not yet acquired that elevation and influence necessary effectually to repudiate such principles, the infidel, who knows no higher motive of conduct than expediency, would naturally assume a bolder attitude and more unblushing front. There are few communities at the present day, in which infidelity is more disreputable or which is more conspicuous for the cultivation of the social virtues, and respect for the institutions of religion, than that of Halifax. Within the last eight or ten years, the cause of serious godliness has been cheeringly progressive among the various classes of its inhabitants; and we are truly gratified to add that, several ministers of the venerable Establishment have been among the most active and eminent instruments in transfusing a quickening influence through the torpid mass of a dormant christianity. May many more emulate their blessed example; and enter into their labours, flaming with generous ardour for immortal souls!

The remarkable revival of religion at Liverpool, noticed in Mr. Black's last quoted letter to Mr. Wesley, attracted him thither as soon as he could form arrangements to leave for a short time his own charge; and he was amply recompensed for the visit, in the pleasure he derived from a perception of what God had wrought, as well as from catching the invigorating influence of the Spirit of glory and of grace that abundantly rested upon the people. From the middle to the end of May, he was delightfully employed there in his

Master's work. That zeal for the salvation of others, which is an emanation of the love of God, is never accompanied with diminished solicitude for our own. The fire which burns in our breasts cannot, we have just cause to conclude, be from the celestial altar, if it do not purify as well as stimulate ; if in proportion to the ardour and energy it inspires for the immortal interests of our fellow men, it do not excite us to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling." Like the holy apostle in this respect, who although he was in labours more abundant, and stood ready at any moment, from the tenderness of his love to the souls for whom Christ died, to pour out his life as a libation on the altar, in their service ; yet kept his body under, lest whilst he preached the Gospel to others he should himself be a cast-away. Mr. Black recognised in all his engagements for the good of others, the necessity of keeping an introverted eye fixed upon the state of his own heart. Amidst the excitements of the work at Liverpool, he thus writes to his estimable friend Mr. Alexander Anderson, to whom he could on all occasions unreservedly unbosom himself:—"I hope, my dear brother you do not forget me at a throne of grace. Oh ! brother, I stand much in need of grace to support me in the contest. I wrestle not 'with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickednesses in high places.' They are formidable foes. Besides, I feel a great deal of corruption within, ready to join them. But blessed be God his grace is sufficient. My hope revives !

' Our Captain leads us on
To conquest and a crown.'

" But how necessary, notwithstanding, are those

cautions,—‘Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.—Be not high minded, but fear.—Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.’ My supreme desire is, to know and do the will of God. O ! for an overcoming faith !—a faith that inflames the soul with love—that purifies the heart—elevates the affections to things above—endears the Saviour’s blood—embraces his bleeding cross—obtains the great and precious promises—stops the mouth of the devouring lion—quenches the violence of the flaming darts—and turns to flight the armies of the aliens. Such a faith is indeed a priceless jewel, an invaluable pearl. O that the God of all grace may enrich with it my friends and me ! O how great our privileges ! how large his promises ! how free his grace ! how rich his love ! how precious his blood ! Sufficient surely they are to fill our souls with everlasting admiration. O ! may we ever shout, ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God, and made us kings and priests to his Father !’—*Kings !* O may we sway the sceptre of right reason, rule our spirits, govern our passions, and through grace, subdue our corruptions, and triumph over all the powers of darkness. *Priests !* May we then offer acceptable sacrifices to God continually by Christ Jesus, and never cease to intercede for the world.

“His name is as ointment poured forth ; therefore, do the virgins love him. His name is called JESUS ; (O ! delectable name to ruined, helpless, hopeless creatures !) for he shall save his people from their sins. Delightful promise to the believing heart ! He is Emmanuel, God with us ; not *against* us but *with* us—with us in *covenant*—in *union*—in *fellowship*.

Emmanuel ! O glorious name ! Well might the angel who announced his nativity say,—Behold ! I bring you glad tidings of great joy. But I must stop : my meditations have carried me much further than I intended.”

On the first of June he resumed his labours at Halifax with revigorated zeal. A few days after his return, a female, who had been a domestic in his family the preceding winter, came to him testifying her experience of the love of God. She had been often seriously exercised in the course of the winter, and at times in great anguish of mind, but had not till recently received the promise of the Saviour, ‘My peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth, give I unto you.’ Now the shadow of death that overhung her soul, was changed into the light of the morning, and filled with joy unspeakable, she exhorted all to praise God on her behalf.

“Sunday 24th,” he writes, “I went after our own meeting closed, to hear a Presbyterian minister, just from Scotland. His text was, ‘Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life ?’ ‘The conditions of salvation,’ he said, ‘were comprised in the following propositions :—

‘I. Those who have been guilty of *wilful* sin must repent of it, and do so no more ; but practice the opposite virtues.’

‘II. We must forgive all that have offended us.’

‘III. We must make restitution to God, to our neighbour, and to society for the injury we have done them.’

“He then told the congregation that unless these three conditions were complied with, no reasonable hope of mercy could be entertained.”

“ Alas !” exclaims Mr. Black, on listening to this socinian perversion of a subject of such overwhelming importance to every soul of man—the terms on which salvation is offered—“ Alas what miserable preaching this to come from a minister of Christ ! For 1, The fountain of corruption within, was not so much as once named : only outward, wilful sins were slightly mentioned, and that with an *if* ; 2, Faith, precious faith, was not named in the whole discourse, though our Lord insists upon it, as essential to salvation, and St. Paul expressly declares, ‘ Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ 3, ‘ The name of Jesus was just introduced in the close ; neither, however, as the foundation nor as the top stone, but as it were incidentally. And then, to talk of man’s making restitution to God, appears to me to indicate shameful ignorance of, or dreadful aversion to, the propitiation of Jesus, and ill becomes the lips of a Gospel minister.’ ”

The propriety of these animadversions will be felt by all who attach the least value to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Estimating the views and spirit of the reverend preacher from the syllabus of his introductory discourse, as reported by Mr. Black, it certainly does not evince him to have possessed much cordiality of sympathy with the inspired model of Christian ministers, who determined to know nothing else among his hearers, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The results of such preaching are always in accordance with its rapid and unevangelical character. Systematically excluding the solemn verities of the total depravity of human nature, the Deity and piacular sacrifice of the Saviour, the quickening and renovating influences of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of experimental godliness, it has no warning

voice to arouse the impenitent—no healing unguent to pour into the ulcerated wounds of conscience—no purifying element to wash the polluted spirit—no refreshing influences of the Holy Ghost to solace and sustain in life—nor hope blooming with immortality, to irradiate the vale of death. And without these resources, what remains of Christianity but the empty name ?

In his next letter to Mr. Wesley, Mr. Black was naturally led to express his concern, that a person likely to have so much influence, and so ill qualified to direct the souls that looked to him for guidance in the way to eternal life, as the minister above referred to, happened to come to Halifax at a period when a spirit of inquiry was beginning to be awakened in the public mind. Mr. Wesley in reply suggests and recommends to the adoption of him and his brethren the best method of neutralizing the unhappy influence of such teachers :—

“ NEAR BATH, Sept. 26, 1787.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ You have great reason to praise God for the great things that he hath done, and to expect still greater things than these. Your grand difficulty now, will be to guard your flock against that accomplished seducer. When you mentioned a person came from Scotland, I took it for granted that he was a Calvinist. But I find, it is not so well. For I take a Socinian to be far worse than even a Predestinarian : and such, one may easily conclude him to be from the heads of that miserable sermon. Nevertheless I advise you and all our preachers, never oppose him openly. Doing thus would only give the unawakened world an advantage

against you all. I advise you farther, never speak severely, much less contemptuously of him in any mixed company. You must use no weapons in opposing him, but only those of Truth and Love. Your wisdom is, first, strongly to inculcate the doctrines which he denies; but without taking any notice of him, or seeming to know that any one does deny them. Secondly, to advise all our brethren (but not in public,) never to hear him at the peril of their souls. And thirdly, narrowly to enquire whether any one is staggered, and to set such one right as soon as possible. Thus, by the blessing of God, even those that are lame will not be turned out of the way. Peace be with your spirit.

“ I am,

“ Dear Billy,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

This, like all Mr. Wesley's letters, contains *multum in parvo*, much matter in few words; and is replete with that ‘prudence in counsel’ for which he was so eminent. It is well worthy the attention of those who are set for the defence of the Gospel, when placed in circumstances similar to those by which it was elicited. Notoriety and importance, the coveted objects of their ambition, are often given to the disseminators of heterodoxy, by the injudicious public allusion and attacks of those who feel it their duty to oppose them. How much more dignified, ordinarily, would be the conduct, as well as complete the triumph of those who occupy the citadel of truth, were they to allow its puny assailants to exhaust their artillery, without deigning to return the charge, or betraying any

symptoms of apprehension for its safety. Cases sometimes indeed occur in which a different course is not only justifiable but imperative ; instances in which the power of talent or the splendour of eloquence combine to give currency to error, and popularity to its propagators. Then the true minister of Jesus should gird himself for the contest, and unashamed of the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, fearlessly meet the array of its antagonists.

Mr. Black, who in the outset of his religious career was animated by the speedy accession of the various members of his family to the spiritual family of God, had now the additional satisfaction to learn that his brother John had begun to testify, publicly, repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ; and was likely to be made a great blessing to the people of River Philip—the place of his residence—and the surrounding neighbourhood.—“ It gave me indeed,” he says in a letter written to him on receiving this gratifying intelligence, “ no small satisfaction to hear of the Lord’s very gracious dealings with your soul, and that he has also opened your mouth to speak in his name. Pray that he may never suffer the enemy to shut it : but covet earnestly the best gifts. I know not but the Lord may call you from the *intervales* as he did David from the *sheepfold*, and Amos from the *sycamore tree*. Say not, This can never be. God can do wonders. He raises the dead, and makes even the dumb to speak his praise, and proclaim his grace. Not long since I was at Liverpool, where God is doing great things. Ten souls professed faith one night. O brother, go on with courage, and the Lord will increase both your gifts and graces. I find Jesus a blessed

Master though I have been so unprofitable a servant." Mr. Black's anticipations as to his brother's being called into the regular work of the ministry, were not realized: few, however, not exclusively devoted to the sacred employment, have been more assiduous and unsparing in their exertions for the good of souls than John Black, Esq. Active in his habits, and involved for many years in the solitudes and occupations of business, at no time, did he permit these to veil from his sight the great end of life, or to seal his lips whenever he had an opportunity of speaking for God. It was indeed a prominent trait in the character of that excellent man that he evinced the same promptitude and alacrity in responding to the calls of sacred duty, when under an accumulation of cares, as when exempt from any thing to dissipate or oppress his mind. He was "instant in season and out of season;" and never more ardent in his zeal, and earnest in his public addresses than in the closing periods of his long and useful life. Over death and the grave God at length gave him the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the wide circle of his surviving acquaintance, none we believe would deem the Holy Spirits' testimony to Barnabas an inappropriate inscription for his monument—"HE WAS A GOOD MAN."

Mr. Black looked with the most ardent desire for Mr. Garretson's return to Nova Scotia after the Baltimore Conference, but in vain. The resolution which at the united recommendation of Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke had passed the meeting, designating him to the general superintendance of the Methodist Societies in British America, having in a more advanced stage of the proceedings been, for some unknown reasons, rescinded, the connection of that valuable and apostolic

man with British Methodism ceased. This, as we have seen, was a source of great sorrow and disappointment to Mr. Black, emotions in which Mr. Anderson and hundreds more deeply participated. In a letter to Mr. Garrettson more than a year after he had left the province, Mr. Anderson says—"We ardently long for your return to this province; and have expected you for some time past. We trust, however, the charge you have received in the United States is for the glory of God and the good of souls." But although in the providence of Him whom he served with his spirit in the Gospel of his Son, he was removed to another sphere of activity, endeared by many early and hallowed associations, he did not forget the sheep whom he had watched and fed in the northern wilderness; their eternal interests lay near his heart, and his influence in the Conference was employed to obtain for them the ministerial help they so much required. At that Conference the Rev. Messrs. Jessop and Hickson were appointed to Nova Scotia. In the following extract of a letter written by Mr. Black to Dr. Coke, under date of June 26, 1787, reference is made to this opportune provision, and a lingering hope expressed that the Doctor might yet have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to them:—"Brother Jessop has arrived at Shelburne; whether brother Hickson has or not, I have not yet learned. Our society here (at Halifax) is more lively at present than I have ever known it. About fifteen have been added since brother Garrettson left. Brother Cromwell, I understand, left the province the very day brother Jessop arrived. We greatly love to see you, and pray God to give you a prosperous journey hither, at the time appointed. What you

allude to in the close of your letter, will, I think, be best passed over in silence. It was almost totally effaced from my memory, and probably I should never have thought of it again, had not your letter called it to mind. Indeed I can scarcely remember either what I said to Mr. Garrettson, or with what I was grieved ; there is, however, nothing now."

The force of Mr. Black's character, and the peculiar relation in which he stood to the work in Nova Scotia, naturally gave him a paternal influence over the rest of the preachers, which he always employed with wisdom and affection towards them, and a single eye to the glory of God. Mr. Grandine entertaining thoughts of marriage, communicated his views and intentions to Mr. Black with filial respect and deference, and requested his counsel in the matter. No apology will be deemed necessary for introducing the following extract from Mr. Black's reply, alike distinguished as it is for piety and prudence :—" Last fall you desired my advice on a matter of the last moment, namely, Matrimony. But perhaps it is unnecessary for me *now* to say any thing on the subject ; since, as you have been so long detained at the Island, you have probably given up all thoughts of the matter for the present. It may be, indeed, that Providence ordered it so, that you might be prevented from taking a rash step. However, if a word of advice will be of any benefit, I am willing to give it : *First*, then, Be extremely cautious how you resolve on changing your state. Never think of doing this, until you have good and sufficient grounds to conclude it is the will of God. Nor should you believe all that a fond or deceived heart may say on such a subject ; but rather hearken to the dictates of sober reason and conscience. In

order to which you ought to divest yourself as much as possible of prejudice, and consider, 1, whether you would be more useful in a married or single state ; 2, whether your temporal circumstances are such as to render it prudent for you to marry ; and 3, whether the person *in view*, be a proper and suitable person with respect to natural disposition, grace, and other qualifications. If after weighing these things impartially, you deliberately think you could be more useful in a married state—if Providence has so ordered your circumstances that it would not involve yourself, and (what would be far worse,) *her* in trouble—and if the object of your regard be a person of good natural disposition, of grace, and in other respects suitable, then I think you may venture to marry without fear of displeasing God. But, *Secondly*, Be careful that your affections are not too much drawn towards the creature, as well as in what manner your courtship is conducted. Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay ; nothing light, trifling or unchristian. With great deliberation, self-examination, fasting and prayer, dedicate yourself anew to God ; and then give your hand. At the same time, were I to give my judgment, I must say, I do think it would be wrong for you, in your present circumstances, to marry Miss —.

“WILLIAM BLACK.”

The second Nova Scotia Conference began at Halifax on the 15th of October, 1787. The preachers present appear to have been, besides Mr. Black, Messrs. John and James Mann, William Grandine and William Jessop. Like the first it was distinguished by love in the spirit, and harmony in counsel. During the session, Mr. Black opportunely received a letter

from a friend in New York, containing an account of one of the most remarkable revivals on record, then in progress in the States. Such thrilling intelligence coming just at the time they were deliberating on the means of promoting the work of God, was well adapted to invigorate their faith, influence their zeal, and expand their anticipations of usefulness in the work to which they were about afresh to consecrate all their energies. The letter stated—"God is doing great things in New York. Several have lately found peace, and many are inquiring the way to Zion. But this is nothing in comparison of the great work God is carrying on in Virginia, especially in two circuits. Fifty, sixty, an hundred, yea, an hundred and fifty souls have been converted in a day. Many, even persons of the first rank, have been struck to the ground, as if dead, and lain as heaps of slain on the field of battle. Seven thousand are supposed to be under convictions in two circuits." A more particular account of this glorious outpouring of the Holy Spirit, was afterwards received by Mr. Black from his friend and brother Mr. Garrettson, in an extract of a letter he had received from a preacher labouring in the very scene of the pentecostal visitation :—

"PETERSBURG, August 3d, 1787.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Praise God for the consolation. I never read in Mr. Wesley's journals of so great a work (for the time) as God has been already and is still carrying on in these parts. I hear the revival extends one hundred and fifty miles south of this town. Last Saturday and Sunday I attended a quarterly meeting at brother Jones'. My pen cannot convey to you an idea of the

mighty power of God, as there displayed. I never saw the tenth part of such a work before. Before the preachers began to speak, the power of God came down. Hundreds of sinners began to cry aloud for mercy, and saints to rejoice, and pray for them. We had no other chance to preach to the people than by taking part of them into the woods at a distance from the cries of the rest. I suppose the congregation consisted of at least five thousand souls. I cannot attempt to give you an account of the particulars, but leave you to judge. Scores of sinners lay as in the pangs of death. It was thought that in this and the other quarterly meeting, held nearly at the same time, there were five hundred souls converted to God. On two or three circuits, within two months, about one thousand souls have found peace with God. Saints stand on the mountain top. Glory ! Glory ! Glory be to God that I ever lived to see this day in Virginia ! I am happy continually in God. I now feel the love of Jesus streaming down into my soul. Glory ! Glory be to the dying Lamb for ever !

“ R. G.”

The autumnal months of this year were principally occupied by Mr. Black in visiting the societies in different parts of the province, particularly those of Liverpool, Shelburne, and Cape Negro. Important and successful as those labours were, it would be difficult, as they exhibit no incident of an unusually striking character, to exempt a minute detail of them from the tedium of monotony. His most absorbing engagements in other places, could never cause him to forget the society at Halifax, concerning which he naturally cherished throughout life a pastoral solicitude peculiarly

intense and vigilant. On the receipt of the animating letter, an extract contained in which has been given above, his mind instinctively flew to his beloved flock at Halifax, and was drawn out in the most fervent aspirations for their felicity and increase. Denied the opportunity of giving utterance to these feelings personally, he wrote to them from the fulness of his heart the following letter :—

To the Methodist Society at Halifax.

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 “SHELburnE, Nov. 28, 1787.

“MY DEAR BRETHREN AND SISTERS,

“Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you. The Lord knoweth that I love you, and long for light to surround the path in which you walk. Next to the light of my Redeemer’s countenance, I count it my greatest joy to see you engaged for God, and the good of your souls ; ‘ walking in all his ordinances and commandments blameless.’ O my brethren and sisters, let religion be the business of your lives ; let it go with you into every company, attend you in every place, and it will preserve you from all evil. Wear it as a chain of gold about your neck ; esteem it as your brightest ornament, your greatest glory. Wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her self-denying paths are peace. She is a tree of life to every one that layeth hold of her, and happy is every one that retaineth her : for the merchandise thereof is better than the merchandise of silver ; and the gain thereof, than fine gold. She is more precious far than rubies ; and all that can be desired are not to be compared to her. Do you desire *honour* ? Let it be the honour that cometh from God only. And what, my brethren, can be equal or com-

parable to the honour of being the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation—of being made priests and kings unto God for ever and ever? And such honour have all the saints. Do you desire *riches*? Let God be chosen as your chief good, and you are in possession of the pearl of great price, even durable riches and righteousness. Covet to be rich in faith and good works; so shall you be rich in the favour of God and the comforts of religion here, and ere long, in the possession of a kingdom that cannot be moved. Would you be safe from fear of evil, exempt from all alarms? ‘Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.’ So shall he hide you under the shadow of his wings, and cover you with his feathers; he shall be your defence, your munition of rocks. You shall dwell on high; bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure. Though thousands fall at your right hand, and ten thousand at your left, God shall be a wall of fire around you: no evil shall come nigh your dwellings. But, oh! should you love the world, pamper the flesh, and indulge the low temptations of Satan, you will send your souls down to perdition. Give then, O! give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Seek after bright manifestations of the love of God, and continual communion with him. Provoke one another unto love, and to good works; and let me entreat you, by all means to stir up the gift of God that is within you. Use all the means of grace, private, family, and public prayer; reading, hearing, and meditation on the word of God; fasting, abstinence, and self-denial; christian converse, brotherly exhortations, and class-meetings. In future, my dear brethren, let us neglect none of these things. Some

of you are backward in attending your class-meetings. Should I say wrong, were I to intimate the reason is, the spirit of watchfulness, of prayer, of self-denial, is dying away in your hearts? I fear I should not. If your hearts are entirely given to God, I cannot but think you will yet see good days in Halifax, and such a work of God as you have never yet seen. O, let us pray much for it. I bless God I have had profitable and delightful seasons since I left you. Brethren! pray for me, that I may be faithful unto death. To make the hearts of sinners rejoice, and as matter of encouragement to mourners, I send you the following account of the work of God in Virginia. [The above extract is here inserted; he then continues.] O ye saints of God, is not this good news? Mourners! is not this glad tidings? O come, come to Jesus, and see the salvation of God. O come, His grace is free for *all*, for *you*. Now, even *now*, his arms are open to receive you.

Brethren! Pray that the heavenly gale may blow upon the dry bones in Nova Scotia's vale. Methinks you already begin to pray; and while you are yet calling, the Lord answers—'I will cause my Spirit to enter into them, and they shall live.' Amen—even so, Lord Jesus.

" I am, dear Brethren,

" Your servant in the Gospel,

" W. BLACK.

CHAPTER IX.

MR. BLACK RENEWS HIS COVENANT WITH GOD—
DEPRESSING TEMPTATIONS—LETTER FROM MR.
WESLEY—DEMONIACAL INFLUENCE—CONSECUTIVE
PREACHING—TEMPTATIONS INCIDENT TO THE SA-
CRED OFFICE—MR. BLACK'S MEEKNESS—HIS ZEAL
FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS—LETTER TO HIS FA-
THER-IN-LAW—SUCCESS OF HIS LABOURS—HIS EAR-
NEST DESIRES AND EFFORTS AFTER INCREASED
HOLINESS AND USEFULNESS.

AMONG the means to which holy men of God have in all ages resorted, for the purpose of promoting the divine life in their souls, they have found the renewing of their covenant with God at certain seasons eminently influential, in detaching their affections from earth, quickening their spiritual desires, cherishing a watchful and devotional frame, and impelling to a more faithful discharge of all the duties of life. Whether by an act of solemn dedication to God we should recognize our obligations to render uniform obedience to his laws, is a matter not left to our arbitration. The duty to do so is imperious, universal, and immutable. It is prescribed by the highest authority, and enforced by the most tremendous sanctions. In the "exceeding great and precious promises" by which God has graciously engaged, by the continued exercise of all his perfections, to promote the felicity of his people, we

possess not the slightest claim to participation, unless, on our part, by the surrender of our hearts and affections to Him, as their rightful claimant, and the dedication of all our powers to his service, we become his people. Every moment, therefore, that we postpone our attention to this momentous transaction, we are disobeying the voice of God, despising the most exalted privilege of which we are susceptible, and perilling our immortal souls.

If it be right, if it be indispensable for the repentant sinner, in his application to God for pardon and salvation, thus to resign himself to be governed as well as saved by him, it is equally so for the believer to live under the full impression that "the vows of God are upon him;" and the occasional renewal of his covenant with God must serve to deepen as well as perpetuate his piety. Doubts have, indeed, been entertained by some good men, as to the propriety of covenanting with God in the form of a series of resolves drawn up for the purpose, and preserved as a commemorative record of the transaction; but we confess we are unable to appreciate the force of the reasons by which such scruples are originated. By assuming obligations which the word of God does not impose—by confounding, in our estimate of moral actions, infirmities, inseparable from mortal humanity, with transgressions of the divine precepts—by placing any confidence for salvation in the act of our dedication to God, or in the fidelity with which we may discharge our recognised duties, we may indeed accidentally pervert the design of a solemn and important means of grace. But it is worthy of serious consideration of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, whether evils, purely adventitious, or the apprehension of the

charge of legality, should deter any Christian from an expedient for accelerating his growth in grace, which has the sanction of the example and of the success of many of the holiest men that ever lived—and which is, in fact, merely a response to the utterances of divine authority and love,—a solemn recognition of the great moral principle that pervades the New Testament—“BEING NOT WITHOUT LAW TO GOD, BUT UNDER THE LAW TO CHRIST.”

The public “renewal of the covenant” at the commencement of every year, is a part of the spiritual economy of Methodism ; and its admirable adaptation, as evinced by experience, to answer the purpose for which it was introduced by its wise and pious founder, is the best recommendation of the practice. Whether Methodism in Nova Scotia was, in the earlier years of Mr. Black’s ministry, conformed in this particular to Methodism in England, I am unable to say ; but that he individually renewed his covenant with God on the first day of every new year, from the period of his conversion to his death, there is every reason to believe. In this manner we find him entering on the year 1788 ; not however without confessing and deploring the deficiency of his faith, fervour, and sincerity, as compared with the claims of a transaction of an import so solemn and momentous. And we seem to hear in his devout aspiration recorded in his journal the following day—“Oh, my God, may this year be *all* devoted to thee ! Let not my heart be drawn aside”—the lingering echo of his recent engagements to live unreservedly to God.

His labours throughout this year, as well as the spirit by which they were animated, fully accord with the results we should be naturally led to predict from

so promising a commencement. The same steady zeal, the same unsparing diligence, and the same patient endurance of privation and fatigue by which he had heretofore been distinguished in doing the work of the Lord, are still conspicuous. Nor is there the slightest relaxation perceptible in his wonted attention to the state of his own heart. An introverted eye sleeplessly watches its movements, severely scrutinizes all its motives, and marks the decline or elevation of its spiritual desires and enjoyments.

The former part of this year was, however, a season of fiery trial from the adversary of his soul, and of unusual mental depression. To such an extent, indeed, does a tinge of melancholy predominate in his record of his experience during this period, that he appears, for at least part of the time, to have been too much under the influence of temptation to be capable of forming a correct estimate of his own spiritual state. The exercises of his mind at such seasons, cannot, it is apprehended, be more accurately described than in the words of one in whom an acquaintance with the devices of Satan, unusually profound, was blended with a knowledge of the whole range of biblical literature.*—“In such cases Satan is often permitted to diffuse *darkness* into the understanding, and envelope the heavens with clouds. Hence are engendered *false views* of God and His providence, of men, of the spiritual world, and particularly of the person's own state and circumstances. Every thing is distorted, and all seen through a false medium. Indescribable distractions and uneasiness are hereby induced : the mind is like a troubled sea,

* Dr. Clarke's reflections on the third chapter of Job.

tossed by a tempest that seems to confound both heaven and earth. Strong *temptations* to things which the soul contemplates with abhorrence, are injected; and which are followed by *immediate accusations*, as if the injections were *the offspring of the heart itself*: and the trouble and dismay produced, are represented as the sense of guilt from the consciousness of having in heart committed these evils! 'The soul is cast down but not destroyed; perplexed, but not in despair. It is on all sides harrassed: without are fightings; within are fears, but the *will* is inflexible on the side of God and truth; and the heart, with all its train of affections and passions, follows it. The man does not wickedly depart from his God; the outworks are violently *assailed*, but not *taken*; the city is still safe, and the citadel impregnable.'

A few extracts from his Journal will illustrate his feelings at this period.

"January 19th.—The last week I have been mostly occupied in reading, writing, and other religious employments: but I have felt but little freedom and fervency in prayer—little comfort in God or divine refreshments from him; but a great aversion to the cross, and coldness in duty. Alas! although I am almost always employed in the duties of religion, yet I seem to do nothing as I ought to do.

"February 20th.—It sometimes appears as if trials are not far distant. When I compare my many mercies with my ungrateful returns, I seem to see the rod lifted up; and am ready to conclude, surely if the Lord loves me, he must correct me—the thought distresses me—my flesh seems to creep—Lord, I fear before thee. But, Lord God, gracious and merciful, I deprecate

not correction ; only give me to maintain a becoming carriage under thy hand.

“ April 20th.—Preached three times to day. I have found very little comfort in duties lately. O my leanness ! my leanness ! Just reason have I to complain. Oh ! that I were as in months past, as in the days when the candle of the Lord shone upon me, and every day brought fresh joys ! ‘ Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.’ Surely, then, a want of uprightness, of purity of intention, must be the cause of a want of joy. O Lord, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation.”

The fact that amidst all this gloom and self-crimination, “ his will was inflexible on the side of God and truth,” is apparent from the results of which they were productive. Instead of causing him to abandon his confidence, and restrain prayer before God, they had the opposite tendency : the depth of his prostration in the awful presence of the Most High, was attended with proportional intensity of desire after the manifestations of his love, and with the most importunate supplications for “ grace to help in time of need.” In proof of this, as his personal experience is now the topic of observation, it may be proper here to present the reader with an entry made in his Journal, under date of August 15th.

“ I rose earlier than common this morning, and spent two hours in devotional exercises. My heart was somewhat drawn out after God. But, alas !

‘ How far from Thee I lie !
Dear Jesus, raise me higher.’

I am, indeed, less than the least of all saints. How justly might God throw me out of the Ministry, and

out of the Covenant. The state of my mind appears to be this :—I seem to desire nothing but God. I have long since shook hands with the world: its manners and its maxims I have renounced. Its pleasures and honours are vain, and all its glories fading in my view. And yet I am, many times, hurried away in my mind by it, and my intercourse with heaven obstructed. My happiest days are those in which my mind is most with God. He is my chief joy; and in comparison of Him, all other things are dross and dung. I would be always delighting myself in the Lord, and adoring his perfections. Yet, strange as it may appear, I am frequently in such a frame that I neither discern his beauties, nor have any realizing sense of his being. All the vigour of my spirit flags and dies; and I have no relish for either *earth, heaven, or God*. It is a most distressing consideration to me, that I live at so low a rate, and so unworthy of my profession. Although my outward conduct appears blameless to men, my heart is not right with God.

“1. I am wanting in *humility*. ‘Pride, that busy sin,’ follows me wherever I go. I have frequently found it in the pulpit, in the parlour, and in the closet, robbing God of his honour, and insidiously courting the praise of men. O my God, humble me in the dust.

“2. I am manifestly wanting in *zeal*. It does not eat up *all my time*. I sleep too long in the mornings; and do not, when I am up, properly improve every opportunity in study, conversation, prayer, &c. My talents are not all occupied as they ought to be, for the glory of God, and the good of men.

“3. I am also deficient in *love to God and man*. I dare not say that I do not love the Lord: but, alas! how little do I love Him! All the powers of my soul

ought to be absorbed in Him ; and inflamed with the most ardent, constant, and importunate desires after Him.—To *man*. Oh ! for the tender, melting, bowels of Jesus. Alas ! I can see sinners rush headlong into eternal death, without (many times) shedding one tear ; and too, too often do I address them in a cold and unassuming manner.

“4. Hence it appears that I am wanting in faith, the root of all. Oh, for a heartfelt conviction of the being, perfections, and attributes of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ ! Then, with Moses, I should endure as seeing Him who is invisible, and prove *faithful in all his house*. O my soul ! it is high time for thee to awake. This is strange conduct in a Christian—much more, in a Minister. Arise ! Arise ! and in the strength of God, resolve, 1. To maintain a continual sense of thy own nothingness ; to lie low at the feet of Jesus ; and reject with abhorrence all the solicitations of pride—that God-robbing, devil-like disposition. 2. Zealously to improve thy time, by consecrating all thy strength and talents to the service of Christ, and of his Church. 3. Never to rest until thou lovest God with all thy powers, and thy neighbour as thyself. And, lastly, remember that without faith it is impossible to please God. Lord, thou knowest I would heartily say AMEN. O help me to arise, and shake myself from this lukewarm disposition. I blush ; and would hide me under the cross of Jesus. God be merciful to me a sinner !”

It must have afforded him some alleviation, amidst his depression, to receive the following letter from Mr. Wesley, dated from Gloucester, March 19th, 1788.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I am glad to find you are still going on in the

glorious work to which you are called. We have need to make haste therein ; to use all diligence. For the work is great ; the day is short ! and lonely is the night wherein no man can work !

“ It is a kind Providence which has placed brother Anderson and you in one house. For you may have many opportunities of strengthening each others’ hands in God.

“ It is well that Satan is constrained to show himself so plainly in the case of those poor demoniacs. Thereby, he weakens his own kingdom, and excites us to assault him more zealously. In the beginning of the work in England and Ireland, we had many instances of the kind. But he now chooses to assault us by subtilty more than by strength.

“ I wish you would do all you possibly can to keep our brethren in peace with each other. And your pains will not be lost on poor John McGeary. There is much good in him. Indeed, he is naturally of a bold, forward temper. But I hope his zeal is now according to knowledge.

“ Undoubtedly you know* the objections which

* Mr. Stretton was one of the preachers then stationed at Harbour Grace, in Newfoundland. Had the objections above referred to, been of a very grave nature, or in Mr. Wesley’s estimation, well sustained, it is likely he would have deemed something further necessary in the case, than friendly admonition. On the same day that he wrote the above letter to Mr. Black, he wrote also to Mr. Stretton, and alluded delicately to the same matter. The autograph happening to be among Mr. Black’s papers, now lies before me ; and reluctant to suppress or mutilate any thing from the pen of Wesley, I here insert it.

To Mr. John Stretton.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ I am glad the little contest between Mr. Balfour and John

John Hoskins makes to John Stretton. If there is any ground for them, should you not freely and lovingly talk with brother Stretton? Praying that you may increase with all the increase of God,

“ I am,

“ Your affectionate friend and Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

The high value which Mr. Black attached to the privilege of so intimate an association with his friend and brother, Mr. Anderson, on which Mr. Wesley congratulates him, is apparent from numerous references to it in his Journal, as also from his correspondence with that estimable man. As a specimen of the benefit they mutually derived from so beneficent a providence, Mr. Black's reflections on one of their

McGeary, is come to a conclusion. It is good advice to every Christian, ‘ If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.’ But of all others, the Methodists are concerned carefully to follow this advice. We are a new people, and consequently must expect that many will be prejudiced against us. And there is no way to remove that prejudice, but to overcome evil with good. The *experience of Phoebe Bland is an admirably good one, truly consistent both with Scripture and reason; and the account is well drawn up, with good sense, and in remarkably good language.

“ I have a confused remembrance of some objections against you last year, made I think by John Hoskins. I hope, if there was once some foundation for them, it is now removed. We have need to take the utmost care that the good which is in us be not evil spoken of.

“ I am,

“ Your affectionate Brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

* Sent by Mr. Black to Mr. Wesley.

spiritual interviews, may here be cited. "Truly our conversation was sweet and profitable. O, my God, what hast thou done for this family ! We seem to be all of one heart and soul—all striving together for the hope of the Gospel. We have nothing but peace in our borders from day to day. What am I, O my Lord ! that thou shouldst deal thus with me, the least of all thy people."

Mr. Wesley's remarks respecting *demoniacs*, were elicited by certain statements communicated to him by Mr. Black of some singular cases he had been called to witness ; and particularly in relation to one that had fallen under his observation a short time previously, the phenomena of which appeared plainly to indicate diabolical agency. It required four men to hold the unhappy individual, to prevent his injuring himself or others ; and he was with difficulty prevented from rushing on Mr. Black when he approached him. Persuaded that the man was under satanic influence, and that the prayer of faith was the only resource, Mr. Black immediately fell on his knees, and implored help of Him to whose all-subduing power devils yield a trembling homage. A change the most surprising instantaneously ensued. The wild agitations of the man's spirit subsided into a rational calm—tranquillity succeeded to torture—and the lips that a few moments before had uttered the language of blasphemy, breathed the praises of Jesus !—Had a sceptic or a neologist been a spectator of the scene, he would probably have felt how inadequate are the theories of infidel philosophy, or of self-styled *rationalism*, to account satisfactorily for such phenomena.

After the District Conference, which was this year held at Halifax on the 6th of May, Mr. Black spent

about a month in visiting Shelburne, Barrington, Cape Negro, Port Latore, and Port Medway ; and on his return to Halifax, found the work of the Lord prospering in the hands of Mr. James Mann, under whose ministry Miss Rebecca Lovell, who afterwards proved an ornament of the cause, was on this occasion converted to God.

It is among the admitted disadvantages of an itinerant ministry, in country places where the preachers' appointments are numerous, that it is seldom in his power to pursue a course of consecutive instruction on any extended portion of Scripture, or in any department of the system of theology. When regularly officiating to the same congregation, the Christian minister will find *his own* account in occasionally, at least, adopting this method, while it will be found equally conducive to the profit of his people. Nothing more powerfully tends to induce that habit of close attention to *the word of truth*, without which a man, however pious, can never become *a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of God, who is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old*. It is equally creditable to Mr. Black's judgment, and to his desire at once to accumulate and diffuse the riches of scriptural knowledge, that he frequently acted under this principle in his public ministrations.—“ In my last sixteen discourses,” he writes, under date of the 17th of August, “ I have taken a view of man in his primitive state—in his fall—the consequences of his apostacy, to himself and to his posterity—the interposition of a Mediator—his offices—incarnation—life—death—resurrection—ascension into heaven,—and session on the right hand of the Father. O, how wonderful”—

he exclaims with devout rapture—"how wonderful is the process of redeeming love!"

The sacred office is generally regarded as eminently favourable to the cultivation of personal piety; but, while it confers an exemption from many temptations to which other stations of life are exposed, it has some peculiar to itself. To be constantly conversant with the things of religion, *ex officio*, tends, by rendering them familiar, to make them less impressive upon the heart; and, if a habit of formality be thus induced, the tomb of vital religion is prepared. It behoves the minister, therefore, always to remember that he has himself a soul to save, which is in the same danger, and must be saved in the same way, as the souls of those to whom he preaches. As our entire duty is comprised in being "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," the pages of religious biography are fraught with profitable instruction, and often array living godliness before us, in a form even more influential than contemporaneous example. This species of reading, pursued in association with general studies, is adapted not only to suggest many hints useful to the minister in his official relation, but to operate with the most salutary effect on his individual spirituality. Mr. Black was in the habit, with a view to the quickening of his soul in its converse with God, to take this method; and his reflections on the *Lives of Whitfield and Fletcher*, which he perused in the autumn of this year, naturally suggested the remarks. Respecting the former, he observes—"I have for a short time been reading, each day a little, of the life of Whitfield, and have now got through it. He was, indeed, a burning and a shining light. Thousands have cause to

bless God for raising up such a man. What abundant honour did God confer on this his servant, in rendering his labours so peculiarly successful in the conversion of souls. Oh ! for something of his zeal ; active, lively faith, and burning love ! How much rather had I tread in the steps, than persecute and despise such a man." Of the latter, he says—"I had much comfort in reading the life of Mr. Fletcher. Truly, he, being dead, yet speaketh. Fain would I follow him as he followed Christ. O, Jesus ! I long to be baptized—to be *filled* with thy Spirit,

'Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone.'

O ! for a faith that inherits all the great and precious promises ! Hast Thou not promised to circumcise our hearts, and enable us to love Thee with all our hearts, and souls, and strength ? O ! in what a blessed Canaan do those live, who are cleansed from all unrighteousness—all filthiness of the flesh and spirit ! O ! give thy poor, unworthy servant, thus to love Thee. Give me a single eye, a pure heart—a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

Such holy aspirations as these, and particularly the intense desire which Mr. Black breathes after "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," the contemplation of the character of no man is more eminently fitted to call forth than that of the saintly vicar of Madely, to whom his biographer bears the memorable testimony :—"So thoroughly had grace subdued nature ; so fully was he renewed in the spirit of his mind, that for many years before his death, I believe he was never observed by any one, friend or foe, to be out of temper, on any provocation whatever." The spirit that

characterises *the code of honour*, falsely so called, the principle that predominates in the world, has its appropriate expression in the words which Tacitus attributes to the seditious Britons: "Nihil profici patientia, nisi ut graviora tanquam ex facili tolerantibus imperentur."—"Patience is of no value, only as it enables us to sustain misfortune with equanimity."—In contrast with such maxims, the New Testament represents meekness as an inseparable attribute of celestial wisdom—an attribute which shone forth with pre-eminent lustre in the character of our blessed Lord, and under the mild aspect of which he presents himself to us as our great exemplar: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The subject of these memoirs studied this important lesson in the school of Christ with no ordinary success. Whatever degree of irascibility might have mingled with his temper in an unregenerate state, he was, through the operation of grace, remarkably benignant and conciliatory in all his social intercourse. There occurred, at this period of his life, an illustration of the propriety of this remark, which, I confess, I have been under some temptation to suppress, lest I might appear to furnish materials of an envious comparison between him and a fellow-labourer in the Gospel, whom he highly esteemed for his talents and piety. I hope, however, it is unnecessary for me to say, that my sole motive in alluding to the unpleasant circumstance, is to discharge with fidelity, and in the most useful manner I can, the function of a biographer. Purely through inadvertence, it seems, Mr. Black had occasioned some inconvenience to his colleague, the Rev. James Wray, who, under the impulse of impatience, permitted himself to write to Mr. Black in a tone not the most kind and

respectful. The receipt of the letter is thus noticed by Mr. Black in his Journal : "I had a sharp, severe letter from the assistant preacher, J. W., to-day ; but I bless God it did not move me." We subjoin an extract from Mr. Black's conciliatory reply :—

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I am always sorry when I occasion trial to any of my friends ; more especially when my friend is a Christian brother ; and most of all, when that brother is a Preacher. But what shall I say ? I am, indeed, as you say, 'but a child still, in many things not more knowing than little Martin ;' and on this account must beg you to bear with me the more. I have not wilfully offended. In bringing away the class-paper I certainly was forgetful. Your appointment at Windsor I will endeavour to fulfil, if I walk to it. But is not my dear brother hasty, in saying if I disappoint him in this I shall never do so again ? I know not that I ever acted contrary to any of your directions wilfully.

"If in giving out preaching at Cornwallis I did not advert to the state of the tide, I must entreat you to pardon my inattention here also. I trust I shall be more careful in future.

"I hope my letter reached your hand, to convince you that you were mistaken in thinking I had broken my promise in not writing to you. My letter was written before Mr. Dewolf left town, but as the packet was then coming up the harbour, I did not wish to send it until her arrival, that I might, in a postscript, inform you whether there were any Preachers on board. My soul prays for your prosperity. I remain, with a heart full of love,

"Your affectionate Brother."

We have already had frequent occasion to remark, in the progress of our narrative, that whilst the primary object of Mr. Black's solicitude was the salvation of his own soul, his zeal for the immortal welfare of others was so tender and expansive, as forcibly to remind us of the divine flame that glowed in the bosoms of the first heralds of the cross. The manifestations of this spirit were not confined to the pulpit. His conversation was "always with grace, seasoned with salt;" and his correspondence was decidedly, and, indeed, almost exclusively, spiritual. In addressing believers, he delighted to expatiate on the most elevated topics of practical godliness; and in writing to those whose state he considered unsafe, or who were groaning for the redemption in the blood of Jesus, his appeals, admonitions, and directions were characterized by the most affectionate fidelity. And he knew how to be faithful without being rude. He could enforce the most solemn and searching truths without violating any conventional propriety of life. Take as a specimen of his admirable address in this respect the following letter, addressed to his father-in-law, Mr. Gay, then in London, in which Christian zeal and profound filial respect beautifully coalesce.

"AFFECTIONATE FATHER,

"We expected to have had the pleasure of seeing you here before this time: but since Providence has ordered it otherwise, we desire to submit; praying God to direct all things for the best.

"We trust, Sir, that your stay in England, though involuntary and necessary, will be both pleasing and profitable. May the Lord so overrule it that it may answer the best of purposes, in drawing your affections

from too great an attachment to the creatures, the best of which cannot satisfy the cravings of a heaven-born, immortal spirit.

“ O, my Father ! what happiness, what genuine happiness there is to be found in God, even on this side the grave ! A *peace* that passeth all understanding—a *joy* that is unspeakable and full of glory—a *meekness* which no affront can move—and a *love* that overcometh all things ; with a *faith* that purifies the heart, adorns the life, and endears the Saviour in all his offices ; that calms our fears, tranquillizes our consciences, gladdens our hearts, and disarms death of his sting. This, my Father, this is the religion of the Bible ! of Jesus ! This is the religion, in the propagation of which I desire to spend my life. This I recommend to my Father. But I stop. Perhaps I offend. I did not think of saying half so much. But this is my darling topic, and therefore I must beg you to bear with me.

“ I am, honoured Sir,

“ With great esteem,

“ Your affectionate Son-in-law.”

Mr. Black's labours during the year 1788, although animated with ardent and untiring zeal, were not immediately as productive as those of some previous years ; yet were they neither barren nor unfruitful. In the sanctuary, in his pastoral intercourse with the families to whom he had access, and at the bed of death, he was permitted to witness some remarkable visitations of divine power. Among the latter, the chamber where Mrs. Marchington, a highly respectable member of the society, met her fate, was peculiarly privileged. She expired on the 24th of November, in the full triumph of Christian faith and joy ; and Mr.

Black improved the occasion in a discourse to about eight hundred people, from the appropriate words:—
 “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ !”

The reflections and resolves recorded in his Journal under date of December 30th, instructively show that he closed as he had commenced the year—in a spirit of unreserved consecration to God and his cause:—“I am convinced that though God gives a clean heart, and renews within us a right spirit, for his own name sake, yet will He do it only in such a way as shall exercise our diligence and care. And I am deeply sensible of my short-comings,—

“1. In frequent, close, impartial *self-examination*. This is painful but profitable work. The man of sin is hereby dragged into open day, and destroyed by the beams of heavenly light. By this means we become better acquainted with ourselves, and more deeply feel our need of the blood and spirit of Jesus. I propose, therefore, in future, to examine more closely into the state of my soul, by solemnly instituting such inquiries as the following: In what spirit have I performed the duties of public and private devotion? and what regard have I maintained to God in the interval of those exercises? What diligence have I used in observing *providence*, and redeeming *time*? What command have I exercised over my appetites and passions? What concern have I felt to discharge with fidelity all relative duties? How have I relished the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel? Upon the whole, how am I advancing in my journey to a better world?

“2. In *prayer*, especially *private prayer*. I have no stated times for private devotion except morning and evening. I believe it will be preferable for me to re-

fire at some special time, when practicable, as "*any time is often no time*;" viz., at nine o'clock in the morning, and five in the afternoon. I ought to blush when I think of the aversion I many times feel to this duty, and the worldly thoughts, unbelief, and sad coldness that too often attend its performance. O Lord! forgive my prayers!

"3. In *preaching*. I want a greater love for souls, and a deeper sense of their worth. I am not sufficiently impressed with the lamentable, woful state of the unconverted part of my hearers; nor do I feel a proper sympathy with the tempted. My preaching often appears superficial and unaffecting. O! for the skill of those who are wise to win souls!

"4. In *conversation*. My words are not always weighty; too often, alas! light as air. They want more seasoning with the salt of God's fear and love. I would not speak but to his glory.—O, Thou who art the centre of happiness, and the perfection of beauty! I would not, I cannot be satisfied to serve Thee after this poor manner.

'Strange fires far from my soul remove,—
My every act, word, thought, be love!'"

CHAPTER X.

PERSONAL RELIGION—MR. BLACK'S RENEWED DEDICATION OF HIMSELF TO GOD, AND HOLY RESOLVES—EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL—AFFLICTIONS AND SUBMISSION—HIS ORDINATION BY DR. COKE—THE DOCTOR'S DESIGNATION BY MR. WESLEY AS A GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT OR BISHOP—THE ORDERS OF PRESBYTER AND BISHOP IDENTICAL—THE CHURCH AND THE METHODISTS—DR. COKE APPOINTS MR. BLACK SUPERINTENDENT OF NOVA SCOTIA.

“SCHOOLING THE HEART,” observes a spiritual and sententious writer, “is the grand means of personal religion. To bring motives under faithful examination is a high state of religious character : with regard to the depravity of the heart we live daily in the disbelief of our own creed. Acting from the occasion, without recollection and inquiry, is the death of personal religion. It will not suffice merely to retire to the study or the closet. The mind is sometimes, in private, most ardently pursuing its particular object ; and as it then acts from the occasion, nothing is farther from it than recollectedness. I have, for weeks together, in pursuit of some scheme, acted so entirely from the occasion, that, when I have at length called myself to account, I have seemed like one awaked from a dream. ‘Am I the man who could think and speak so and so ? Am I the man who could feel such a dis-

position, or discover such conduct ?' The fascination and enchantment of the occasion is vanished ; and I stand like David in similar circumstances before Nathan. Such cases in experience are, in truth, a moral intoxication ; and the man is only then sober when he begins to school his heart.*

These monitory suggestions of the venerable CECIL hold up a mirror to every Christian in which he will immediately recognize his own image. Nor let it be forgotten that the recollectedness and self-scrutiny which he so impressively recommends, necessary to the healthy vigour of religious principle and feeling under all circumstances, are particularly demanded at a period when, paradoxical as the intimation may seem, the exhibitions of zeal for the conversion of the world, in which the various denominations of Christians are displaying so animated an emulation, may unconsciously operate against the depth of personal piety, by fostering a habit of religious dissipation. The heart is deceitful, and requires to be garrisoned with sleepless vigilance. While apparently occupied with the most magnificent purposes and plans of usefulness, some unsuspected obliquity may contaminate its motives : while expanding to the interests of humanity, it may forget to look at home. Religious biography is useful chiefly as by laying bare the heart of its subject, it excites us to cultivate a better acquaintance with our own. In comparison of this object, the information we may acquire concerning the outward circumstances, the intellectual character, or the public career of any individual, or respecting the events of cotemporary history, is of little value. Under this im-

* Cecil's Remains.

pression Mr. Black, in the materials he has left for the illustration of his character, has been as minute in the history of his heart as in the record of his labours. Like him, whom of all human beings he took for his model—the incomparable Wesley—he was prepared to say “to candid, reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart.” This he has done in every part of his Journal; but on no occasion with greater explicitness and solemnity than under date of January 1, 1789:—“Thy mercies,” he writes; “O my soul, have been many, and thy thankfulness ought to be proportionally great. By the grace of God I would devote my body and soul to Him: and I now desire to do even again in writing what I have already done upon my knees.

“O! thou great, supreme, eternal God—the Father of mercies, and Creator of all things! I have sorely revolted from Thee; and I confess it would have been just in Thee to have cut me off and sent me to hell. But I trust Thy grace hath called me—Thy mercy hath forgiven me, and Thy spirit comforted my heart. Through boundless grace, some tokens of which Thou hast given me this morning, I believe I am Thy child. My *life*, my *body*, my *soul*, my *all*, I here devote to Thee. Lord! from Thee I received them all: to Thee I desire, in solemn devotion, to return them. How Thou wilt dispose of *me* or *mine* this year I know not; but I now devote all to Thee. Oh! suffer me not to repine at Thy disposal of what is now no longer mine but thine. Here, my Lord, I would lay down my own will; do Thou direct my wandering feet. Thou art my Shepherd, I shall not want; Thou art my rock, and in Thee will I trust; my God, and I will praise Thee. Do Thou but quicken my soul by

Thy grace, and support me in all my conflicts with the adverse powers ; and I promise,

“ To be more watchful in the performance of public and private duties,

“ To maintain a more constant regard to Thy presence in the intervals of duty,

“ To observe with closer attention Thy providence,

“ To redeem time ; and endeavour to improve it better than heretofore,

“ To prize the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel more highly than I have done,

“ To keep a stricter watch over my appetites and passions,

“ To be more strict in the discharge of my relative duties both as a Christian and as a minister,

“ To wrestle with Thee for more love to Jesus, and precious souls,

“ To maintain a greater regard to Thy glory, and seek the destruction of pride.

“ On Thee would I lean for help to do all these things. O my compassionate Lord, help a poor, weak and feeble worm to take up Thy cross and follow Thee ! Oh ! wash me throughly in Thy blood. May the life I live be by faith in the Son of God ! These with my hand I subscribe as my sincere though feeble purposes and desires.

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

This was a day long to be remembered. His cup ran over ; and his supreme, his one desire was to be perfectly assimilated to the image of his Saviour. In these feelings his eminently pious partner fully participated :—a circumstance which he does not forget to

notice : " My wife also has found this a sweet, refreshing day to her soul."

The anniversary of his dedication to God—for such, from his invariable practice, we may term the first day of the year—was appropriately followed on the second of January by a deliberate and grateful review of the most signal mercies of his life, of which memory retained the record. Among these his singular and providential escape from an early death, the circumstances of which are related in the first chapter, claims particular notice ; and it is also highly instructive, as shewing his deep and even awful sense of the malignity of sin, to observe with what mingled feelings of thankfulness and humiliation, he records his obligations to the restraining grace of God, by which amidst much exposure to temptation he had been preserved from falling into many sins, into which the unchecked depravity of his heart would have precipitated him. This is a view of the mercy of God by which we shall be affected in proportion as we feel a sacred horror of offending him, and appreciate the happiness of a conscience unstained by presumptuous sin. The guilt that attaches to the corrupt desires and evil imaginations of our hearts, though never developed in overt acts of transgression, is, indeed, sufficient to condemn us, and to fill us with shame even in the day when the Lord is pacified towards us : it is, nevertheless, an unspeakable mercy to be kept back from presumptuous sin, whether by the intervention of providence, or the control of covenant grace.—From a devout retrospect of past mercies to the duty of self-examination, the transition is natural. We find this order in Mr. Black's spiritual exercises : and, as usual, he sees in the imperfection of his obedience so many causes for self-cri-

mination, that full relief for the conscience is to be found only by throwing himself under the wings of the cherubim. "Jesu," he exclaims—

"Jesu, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress ;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head !"

But let it not be conceived that the operation of his unlimited faith in the atonement for acceptance with God, which produced inward *tranquillity*, terminated here : it was equally efficient of inward *purity*. This is the unailing result of the faith that works by love ; the grand practical refutation of the heresy that separates things morally indissoluble—*faith* and *holiness*. The preceding pages are fraught with exemplifications of this remark. Mr. Black was not one of those who, after beholding themselves in the gospel mirror, go their way, and straightway forget what manner of persons they are : he looked into the perfect law of liberty and *continued* therein. How well the vigour and uniformity of his efforts and aspirations after holiness this year, accorded with the elevated standard of piety to which, at its commencement, he so solemnly engaged to seek a conformity, the following extracts, selected from a mass of kindred materials, sufficiently attest :—

"Sunday, 4th.—The greater part of this day my desires have been much drawn out in prayer. My soul thirsts for a conformity to the divine pleasure ; yet have I had but little comfort. My determination, however, remains unchanged. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. I preached three times to-day ; some were blessed ; but in general I fear the people are dead.

"Tuesday, 6th.—I had considerable liberty in speak-

ing from Jer. ii : 1—3 : “ Thus saith the Lord : I remember thee, the days of thy youth and the love of thine espousals, when thou followedst me in the wilderness, a land that was not sown.” In preaching to others, I would preach to myself. Lord, stir up my soul to remember the time of my espousals. I then had greater warmth of affection than I now have ; though perhaps I was not so established in my judgment, nor so well acquainted with the devices of Satan or the deceitfulness of my own heart. Oh ! give me a deeper sense of my ingratitude to Thee, my heavenly bridegroom, and unfaithfulness to my celestial husband. Write me on the palms of Thy hands ; set me as a seal on Thy breast, and on thine arm ; for jealousy is cruel as the grave. Short of that state in which I can ‘ rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks,’ I would not rest.

“ Sunday, 11th.—I had uncommon liberty in preaching to-day. Lord, let not Thy word fall to the ground. My soul is refreshed—my faith quickened—my hopes are invigorated—and my confidence in the atonement strengthened. I have none but Christ in whom to trust. His atoning blood and prevailing intercession alone form a ground for my faith and hope. But forbid it, heavenly Father that, with the practical Antinomian, I should make the atonement of Thy Son only a cover for my sin :

‘ Rather I would in darkness mourn
The absence of thy face ;
Than e’er by light irreverence, turn
Thy grace to wantonness.’

“ Saturday, 17th.—Lord, I would not deceive my own soul, and conclude I love Thee, when I do not. Search me and try my ways ; prove me and know my

heart : lead me in the right way. I would be little, mean and vile in my own eyes. Thou, O Christ, art made of God unto me *wisdom* ; do Thou direct my wandering feet in the way to a city of habitation—my *righteousness* ; do Thou justify me freely from all things from which I could not be justified by the law of Moses—my *sanctification* ; do Thou cleanse my soul from all the remains of the carnal mind ; from pride, envy, love of the world, and unbelief. Yea, seal me unto the day of eternal *redemption* !

“ Sunday 18th.—God has various methods of dealing with his children ; and they also are of various dispositions, which, together with the various circumstances in which they are placed, and the temptations with which they are exercised, may in part account for their different frames. Some appear to be alternately in raptures, and ready to sink in unbelief and despondency ; filled with joy, or overwhelmed with sorrow. In general my walk (at least outwardly) has been pretty even. Through the severest exercises I have yet met with, the Lord has not suffered me to be greatly moved. I do not remember that anger ever had a place in my heart for one minute against any one, since I first knew the Lord. If I felt it rise, I looked to the Lord, and was delivered. Blessed be his name for this ! By grace I am saved ; and grace shall have the glory. I am never enraptured with joy, nor overpowered with sorrow ; yet neither am I without joys and sorrows. At times I feel Jesus inexpressibly precious : and at such seasons I long for holiness, for a full conformity to the divine will. His commandments then are not grievous ; all things are easy,—and his cross my glory.

“ Sunday 25th.—Since I left home (he was now at

Windsor) my devotions have been sadly interrupted, partly from want of opportunity to retire, but more for want of a heart to pray in every time and place. The promise I have been explaining to the people, I would enforce on my own heart. Thou Lord, hast said that though a worm, yet believing in Thee I shall thresh the mountains. Here, O my soul ! is ground for thy faith : only believe, and thou shalt see the mountains melt and flow down at the presence of the Lord. What art thou, O great mountain ? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain. Lord Jesus, Thy grace is sufficient for me. Breathe, O breathe heavenly vigour and life into my barren soul.

“ Wednesday 28th.—Lord, I am shortly about to preach in Thy name. Do Thou direct me to a suitable text, and enable me so to treat it, that Thy word may reach the hearts of the people. Unless it does this my preaching is vain. But let me first preach to my own heart. Let me not preach to others what I would not practice myself.”

On the 17th of February, he returned from his excursions through the townships of Windsor, Falmouth, and Horton, cheered with the conviction that his strength had not been spent for naught. On the day following he remarks : “ I often find, immediately on my coming home, my mind dissipated ; and it is with great difficulty I can get it staid on God.”

Under date of March 6th, he has these heart-stirring reflections on the incalculable value of time : “ O ! precious, all important time ; how little am I sensible of thy worth ! On thee, eternity itself is suspended. I am now sowing the seeds, the products of which I am to reap in a future world, in *heaven* or *hell*. Impressive thought ! tremendous reflection ; Good

Lord, make me sensible of *what* and *where* I am.

' And is it in the power of threescore years,
To push eternity from human thought ?'

How amazingly am I infatuated when I permit myself to trifle away my time. And to what purpose have I lived to-day. I want a more spiritual frame—a faith that offers all up to God through Christ.

" Wednesday, May 6th.—I have been reviewing the purposes I formed on the 1st of January. I have great cause to be humbled. Alas ! what a fickle heart is mine ; how prone to wander. *Now*, it appears resolved for God, and averse to sin ; none but Jesus appears worth a thought : *anon*, the world comes in, and my mind is covered with a thick veil that obscures all his beauties."

The document to which Mr. Black here refers is marked by a spirit of unlimited surrender to the will and disposal of God ; and from the terms he employs we can scarcely help thinking that it was drawn up under a presentiment of approaching trials of more than ordinary magnitude. However this may have been, it pleased his heavenly Father in the course of this year to test his faith, and afford him an opportunity exemplifying the sincerity, of the professions of self abnegation and acquiescence in the appointments of Providence, which he then made, by unusual family affliction. Three of his children were taken ill about the same time ; respecting the recovery of one of whom especially—his eldest daughter—but slender hopes were entertained. Under this trying visitation the tenderness of the parent and the passive graces of the Christian were alike conspicuous. Sunday, 31st of October, he writes—" For several days I have felt much more of the spirit of prayer than for some time pre-

vious. Celia is yet very ill—on Friday evening when I returned from the preaching house, I thought she was nearly gone. If I know my own heart, I have not one wish respecting her, but that the will of the Lord may be done. November 8th.—I have much cause to bless God, Celia is recovering fast, as also Martin and William. Glory be to God ; He deals kindly with us, and afflicts us far less than we deserve.”

While the domestic scene was thus brightening, it was again suddenly overcast with a deeper gloom by the affliction of Mrs. Black. On the 12th of November, she was attacked with a raging fever ; “ but,” to use his own words, “ what was far worse to bear, her mind was covered with darkness : all her former evidences of God’s favour were clouded ; and she was strongly tempted to give up all, and believe she had never known the pardoning love of God. I firmly believed, however, that these violent throes of mental distress would be followed by greater comforts : and I was the more confirmed in this persuasion, because of her vehement breathings of soul after entire holiness, and the afflicting views she had of the odious nature of sin. Truly, as the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth her soul after God, even the living God. Her present condition and distress she appeared very solicitous to improve, and feared lest she should lose her distress without clear views of redeeming love. ‘ Oh !’ she cried, ‘ I have lived too much at ease—How could I rest without daily and lively communion with God !’ But God showed that He heareth prayer. He soon broke into her soul, filled her with strong consolations, and surrounded her with songs of deliverance.—Blessed be Thy worthy name, glorious Redeemer ! Thy praise is in all the churches ! O help

Thy servant to praise Thee for Thy mercies to himself, and to his family."

Long as Mr. Black had now been engaged in the work of the ministry, and signalized as his labours had been by the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of souls, he had never, up to the month of May in this year, had an opportunity of receiving regular ordination. Not feeling authorized, without the sanction of that ceremonial, to administer the sacraments, it was of course the object of his earnest desire, as a means of less restricted usefulness. The provision which Mr. Wesley had been constrained to make in order to meet the exigencies of the Methodist societies in the United States, soon after the recognition of their independence, by the designation of Dr. Coke as a general Superintendent of those societies, afforded Mr. Black a convenient opportunity of receiving ordination from the hands of that venerable individual. For this purpose he resolved if possible to attend the American Conference at Philadelphia, in which the Doctor was expected to preside. A gracious work appearing among the soldiers in the garrison, just as he contemplated that visit, he was not without scruples as to the propriety of leaving them; which evinces the intensity of his interest in the prosperity of Zion. These scruples were however overruled; and accompanied by the Rev. John and James Mann (who went for the same purpose,) he sailed for Philadelphia on the 7th of May, and arrived there on the 19th, where he met Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and a number of the preachers. In the evening he was ordained a *Deacon*, and on the following day, an *Elder*.

Connected as the validity of the ordinations per-

formed by Dr. Coke may be, in the apprehension of some, with Mr. Wesley's authority to invest the Dr. with the powers and prerogatives of a Christian Bishop—for such his office of Superintendent on the American Continent really involved—it may be proper to exhibit in this place Mr. Wesley's own expose of the grounds on which he proceeded in that designation :—

“(1.) By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the Provincial Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice : and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

“(2.) Lord King's account of the primitive church, convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused, not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.

“(3.) But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are

none, neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end : and I conceive myself at full liberty; as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

"(4.) I have accordingly appointed DR. COKE and MR. FRANCIS ASBURY to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also RICHARD WATCOT and THOMAS VASEY, to act as elders among them by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national church in the world) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use, on the Lord's day, in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the Lord's Supper on every Lord's day.

"(5.) If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding or guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

"(6.) It has indeed been proposed to desire the English Bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, [1.] I desired the bishop of London to ordain only one, but could not prevail. [2.] If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. [3.] If they would ordain them now, they would likewise expect to govern them; and how grievously would this entangle us? [4.] As our

American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state, and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or with the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in the liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.*

“JOHN WESLEY.”

If the sacred elevation of Mr. Wesley's character has exempted him from the imputation of unworthy motives in this business, the propriety of the measure itself has not been unquestioned: under the predominating influence of High Church prejudice it has been assailed with unsparing censure. This was to be expected. Even Mr. Charles Wesley earnestly remonstrated against it, and deemed it no unsuitable occasion for the exercise of his satirical talent. But every objection that has ever been urged against its propriety was anticipated by Mr. Wesley himself, and is completely obviated, as it appears to us, in the explanation which, with a view to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, he has furnished in the preceding letter. It has been alleged that it was preposterous for Mr. Wesley, who was himself only a presbyter, to assume the authority to ordain a Bishop. But this apparent incongruity results not from his principles, but from the assumption of those who impugn his procedure, that bishops and presbyters are distinct orders, a position of the fallacy of which Mr. Wesley had long been convinced. This conviction

* Minutes of Conference for 1785.

was founded upon the fact, that those appellations are indiscriminately applied in the Scriptures to designate the same station in the church ; whence it is plain that the orders were originally identical. Thus the elders of the Ephesian church are addressed collectively by St. Paul as *episcopoi*, *bishops* ; (Acts xxvii : 17, 28) and where he directs Titus to ordain presbyters, he immediately calls them *episcopoi*. (Titus i : 5—7.) On two other occasions (1 Tim. iii : 1, 8 ; Phil. i : 1) the office of presbyters is called by the same Apostle *episcopus* ; and that of *diakonoi*, *deacons*, is immediately afterwards referred to, as the only other office existing in the church. In like manner the Apostle Peter exhorts presbyters “to discharge the office of bishops” —*episcopountes* (1 Pet. v : 1, 2.) *Presbyter* appears appropriately to denote the rank or office itself, and *bishop* intimates the duties that devolve upon those who sustain that rank. According to the most learned of ecclesiastical historians, Neander, * “the name of *presbyters*, by which this office was at first designated, was transferred to the Christian church from the Jewish synagogues. But now, when the churches had spread themselves among the heathen of Grecian origin, there was associated with this appellation, thus borrowed from the civil and religious constitution of the Jews, another name, more connected with the mode of designating social relations among the Greeks, and better adapted to denote the official duties connected with the dignity of presbyters. This was the appellation *episcopoi*, *overseers*, over the whole church and over all its affairs ; just as in the Attic civil administration, those who were sent out to organize the states

* Bib. Repository : vol. iv. p. 254.

dependent on Athens, were called *episcopoi*; and just as this name seems to have become generally current in the language of civil life, to denote any kind of governing superintendance in the public administration." Nothing can be plainer, than that notwithstanding this shade of difference in the import of these appellations, they designate one and the same office, since, as we have sufficiently proved, they are used interchangeably by the Apostles as being entirely synonymous. It was not until the age following that of the Apostles, if so early, that the person who presided in the deliberations of the presbyters was distinctly entitled *episcopus*, and then he was regarded not as superior to the rest in rank, but merely as a *primus inter pares*, the first among equals. It must now be obvious to the reader, that in the appointment of Dr. Coke as a superintendent or bishop, Mr. Wesley closely followed the Scriptures and the primitive church. It was the *extension* of the Doctor's office for a special purpose, not the investing him with a *new* one. And from what individual or number of individuals could such an appointment have so appropriately emanated, as from the father and founder of the Methodist Societies, whose paternal supremacy was recognized throughout the whole connexion?

Such was the source whence Mr. Black derived the official and public authentication of his *Divine* call to the work of the ministry. The solemn occasion did not pass without calling up a vivid recollection of his responsibility, and exciting him to cry afresh to God for help to be "faithful in all his house." "My greatest fear," says he, "is lest I should be found unfaithful in so great a trust. O that as a messenger from

God I may bear a faithful testimony, not fearing the faces of men—that as a *watchman*, I may ever stand on my watch tower, and never be found sleeping—and that as a *steward*, I may ever prove faithful to Him who has entrusted me with his goods. But who, O my God, is sufficient for these things? O let thy strength be made perfect in my weakness. Thou choosest the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty, and things that are not, to bring to naught things that are. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou canst perfect praise. O! that Thou wouldst stand by *me*, and use me greatly in building up Thy church! Get thyself honour, and use me for Thy glory; so shall my soul praise Thee.”

After his ordination, Mr. Black spent a month in Philadelphia with much profit to himself, as well as to those to whom, as with the unction of a fresh commission, he preached the Gospel of the kingdom. His happiness, resulting from the manifest blessing that attended his labours on this occasion, was augmented by a circumstance worth narrating. At the close of an evening meeting, a friend came to him and told him that the sermon he had preached at Mr. Fitzgerald's, while on a visit there in December, 1784, had been the means of the conversion of an individual, who had in the mean time given evidences of deep piety, and was desirous of seeing him as her spiritual father. This cheering intimation gladdened his heart, and suggested the consoling reflection—“Doubtless the faithful ministers of Jesus, in the great day, will find many stand forth and acknowledge themselves their children, of whom they had no knowledge on earth. This ought to teach them to leave the success of their labours with

the Lord, and not to be discouraged though they see but little fruit."

About the 20th of June he found himself again in the bosom of his family, full of gratitude for the mercies which he and they had experienced during his absence, and of holy resolves to make full proof of his ministry. His visit to the States had a most salutary and invigorating influence upon his mind. "I bless God," he writes, "I feel far greater boldness in his cause, and zeal for the conversion of souls."

Among the trials of the previous year, were some unhappy misunderstandings that had taken place between Mr. Wray and some of the rest of the preachers. Mr. Black, apprehending consequences from these occurrences disastrous to the work of the Lord in the province, deemed it his duty to apprize Mr. Wesley of the facts of the case, that he might seasonably exercise his judgment in suggesting a remedy. Without his interposition, however, the breach was healed, and mutual confidence and affection restored. In a letter to Mr. Wesley, dated 22d June, he observes: "My fears last fall drew from me, in my letter to you, a naked relation of our discords. After the heat of temptation was over, and the two brothers, J. and J. M., came to see and talk with brother Wray, all was love and harmony, and I trust nothing but peace is now found amongst us." Thus was Satan defeated, and "charity which is the bond of perfectness" soon again encircled and united those whom he had endeavoured to divide. To Mr. Wesley, now treading upon the verge of the tomb, this intelligence was highly gratifying, and his reply was well adapted to perpetuate and increase the best of feelings. It is dated London, Nov. 21, 1789.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ Your letter has given me great satisfaction. My fears are vanished away. I am persuaded, brother Wray, Stretton and you will go on hand in hand, and that each of you will take an equal share of the common labour. I do so myself. I labour now just as ever I did twenty or forty years ago. By all means proceed by common consent, and think not of *separating* from the Church of England. I am more and more confirmed in the judgment which our whole Conference passed on that head, in the year 1758.

“ I am,

“ My dear Brother,

“ Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

“ J. WESLEY.”

Mr. Wesley's desire, so frequently and strongly expressed in his writings, to perpetuate the connexion between Methodism and the national church, evinces that the zeal which infused such energy into his unprecedented labours for more than half a century, was “the pure flame of love.” Had the ambition, which writers incapable of appreciating the humility and elevation of his motives have attributed to him, supplied the impulse to his exertions, he would have encouraged a separation from the establishment instead of using all his influence to prevent it. In this view, therefore, the course he pursued is hardly to be regretted, although one is at a loss to conceive how a mind so sagacious as that of Wesley could entertain any other idea, than that he had, under God, created the elements of a distinct denomination, and that these elements, unless dissipated, would of necessity assume a

distinct organization as a Christian church after his decease. Indeed all his influence, (and no man ever possessed more,) could not prevent an approximation towards that result previously to his death : and several causes concurred to accelerate and mature it afterwards. These have often been misrepresented. They are correctly stated by Mr. Watson in his life of Wesley : "Some of the violent adherents of 'the old plan,' as it was called, among ourselves, have ignorantly or in a party spirit attributed this to the ambition and intrigues of the preachers ; but the true causes were—that the clergy, *generally*, did not preach the doctrines of their own church, and of the reformation ; and that many of them did not adorn their profession by their lives. It may be added, that in no small number of cases, the clergy were the persecutors and calumniators of the Wesleyan societies ; that the sermons in churches were often intemperate attacks upon their character and opinions ; and that the Methodists were frequently regarded as intruders at the table of the Lord, rather than as welcome communicants. These were the reasons why, long before Mr. Wesley's death, a great number of the societies were anxious to have the sacraments from the hands of their own preachers, under whose ministry they were instructed and edified, in whose characters they had confidence, and with respect to whom they knew that if any one disgraced his profession, he would not be suffered long to exercise it." *Adherence* to Mr. Wesley's principles, then, and not a dereliction of them has placed Methodism in its present position—a position which, we believe, the special providence of the Most High, from the beginning designed it should occupy, as the friend and auxiliary of all, and the enemy of

none whose object it is to spread scriptural holiness through the earth.

Should the reader consider these remarks rather digressive, I hope he will pardon them, as I was unwilling either to suppress the admonition which has called them forth, or to abandon it to the abuse of which it is susceptible.

From the time of Dr. Coke's appointment to the superintendence of the societies in the United States, his care was expected to extend also to those in the adjacent British provinces. With him, therefore, rested the authority to make such arrangements as he deemed best for the promotion of the work in that extending field of usefulness. Mr. Wray had for several years sustained a general charge in Nova Scotia, and being desirous to be relieved from the responsibility, requested Dr. Coke to appoint another in his place. The Dr., from his knowledge of Mr. Black's eminent prudence and piety, immediately nominated him as the most proper person to be Mr. Wray's successor; he was accordingly appointed superintendent over the societies in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. By this appointment Mr. Black felt himself placed in circumstances of delicacy, and was with difficulty prevailed upon to assume the charge. His views on the subject are unfolded in a letter to Mr. Wesley, which we subjoin, written, as will be perceived, before the preceding letter from Mr. Wesley came to hand:—

“REV. AND DEAR SIR,

“It is now almost twelve months since I had a line from you. The multiplicity and importance of your other engagements, I know, will furnish a suf-

ficient reason for this ; yet permit me to beg, if you have a leisure moment, it may be employed in writing me a few lines. I have need of your counsel and prayers.

“ It was matter of great surprise to me to find that I was nominated as the assistant. I would gladly have resigned the office to brother Wray ; but the Stewards and Preachers opposed it. I am far from thinking myself qualified for so important and weighty a charge, and should be glad to be succeeded from England.

“ At Halifax our people are lively. I think I may say they are growing in grace, as well as gradually increasing in number. Our society has swelled from about sixty to one hundred, since this time twelvemonth. At Horton they remain much as they were ; at Windsor there are some additions ; at Cumberland, also, some have been added : at Liverpool and Shelburne we have sustained some loss. I believe our aggregate number at present amounts to about five hundred. I feel much encouraged concerning Halifax : twenty have found peace with God within the last eight months, most of whom are steady, lively, humble souls. I am much comforted among them, and see great cause for thankfulness. How has God changed the scene, since I first came hither in 1786 ! The society is now eight times larger, and eight times more serious and spiritual. Though I have many struggles with unbelief and an evil heart, yet my soul longs for perfect love. O that my God would speedily destroy the remains of the carnal mind ! Jesus is my hope and joy—my sun and shield !

“ My dear—my very dear Father, I remain,

“ Your Son in the Gospel,

“ WILLIAM BLACK.”

“ Halifax, Dec. 2d, 1789.”

The diffidence with which Mr. Black assumed the responsibilities of his new and important office, was no unfavourable omen. By the prudence and zeal with which he discharged its functions for more than twenty years, he shewed himself every way worthy of the trust reposed in him. His eye was single, his judgment discriminating, and his love to Christ, such as in the martyrs glowed; while the conciliatory spirit he uniformly exemplified in his intercourse with his brethren, resembling less the studious practice of an inculcated duty, than the spontaneous flow of the native affection of his heart, secured their reciprocal confidence and attachment.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BEST EVIDENCE OF A DIVINE CALL TO THE MINISTRY—LETTER FROM MR. WESLEY—MERCIES REVIEWED AND FRESH RESOLVES FORMED—ADVANTAGES OF ORDINATION—SACRAMENTAL MEDITATION—ANOTHER LETTER FROM MR. WESLEY—MR. BLACK ATTENDS PHILADELPHIA AND NEW YORK CONFERENCES—INTERVIEW WITH DR. COKE—OBTAINS SIX PREACHERS FOR NOVA SCOTIA—REMARKABLE REVIVAL UNDER HIS MINISTRY IN NEWFOUNDLAND—DIFFICULTIES IN THE SOCIETY IN HALIFAX—VISITS ST. JOHN, N. B.—HIS FIDELITY EXPOSES HIM TO PERSECUTION—EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM MRS. BLACK.

THE best evidence to a minister that he is called of God to preach the Gospel is the conversion of souls by his instrumentality. He may arrogate the honour of being a successor of the Apostles, and he may exhibit all the credentials in vindication of his claim with which man can furnish him, and after all be nothing better than an intruder into God's heritage—uncalled, and totally unqualified, to call sinners to repentance, or to edify the people of God in their most holy faith. That repentance he may possibly himself never have exercised—of that precious faith he may be entirely destitute. The ministry of none, probably, has in a spiritual view been less efficient than that of those who have been most remarkable for their assuming and exclusive pre-

tensions as *the only* divinely authorised ambassadors of Christ. The remark may seem invidious ; but we are conscious of no other feelings and motives in making it than pity for the souls to whom it may prove most painful, and concern for the interest of evangelical truth ; while, we believe, the history of the church, from the days of Constantine to the present moment, furnishes a continuous, illustrative comment on the truth of the intimation. We mean not to insinuate, that all who believe themselves to be (in virtue of the safe transmission through human hands of the seals of the holy office) *in the unbroken and exclusive line of apostolic succession*, are purely on that account to be looked upon as alike devoid of spirituality of character, and of valid ministerial authority. We hope better things. And we know there have been, and there are, in intimate ecclesiastical association with those who put forth such claims, many of the brightest ornaments and most successful heralds of the Gospel. But of *these*, what is the joy or crown of rejoicing ? Is it not the souls whom God has given them ? What are the most valued *seals* of their mission ? Are they not the unequivocal tokens of the divine approbation that enable them *to appeal* to the people among whom they labour, that they ARE the ministers of the Lord Jesus ? How does St. Paul magnify his office by this *moral demonstration* ! “ If I am not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you : for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord.” Such heart-cheering evidences of the power of the Gospel, and of his call to preach it, were increasingly afforded to Mr. Black, and nothing *but such* evidences could satisfy a mind like his. He was enabled to make the following communication to Mr. Wesley relative to the pro-

gress of the good work under his superintendence, towards the close of 1789.

“REVEREND SIR,—

“I have herewith transmitted the number in society, viz. 575, upwards of 400 of whom profess faith. Since my last letter to you we have added 30 more. The work gradually increases. We have had hard work preaching to a dead, hardened, ignorant people in this town, (Halifax) but God is now giving us to see the fruit of our labours. My soul cries out for God, yea the living God : all else is vain and joyless ; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.”

“I am,

“My dear Father, &c.”

We subjoin Mr. Wesley’s congratulatory and encouraging reply :—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“I am glad to hear you have some increase of the work of God in Halifax. If you take care that the brethren fall not out by the way, and that there be no jealousies or coldness between the Preachers, but you all go on in peace and harmony, there will be an increase of it in every place. I have great hopes that the days of coldness and darkness are now past, and that the Sun of Righteousness is rising on Nova Scotia likewise. O stir up the gift of God that is in you, and wrestle with God in mighty prayer. He is doing great things in many parts of Europe, such as have not been seen for many generations ; and the children of God expect to see greater things than these. I do

not know that England was ever before in so quiet a state as it is now. It is our part to wait the openings of divine Providence, and follow the leadings of it.

"I am,

"Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

This letter was worthy of the unequalled man who, after more than half a century of stupendous labours in the cause of Christ, was now ready to be offered up. How do the achievements of heroism—the fame of erudition—the corruscations of genius—the creations of poetry—the giant strength of intellect—and the splendour of royalty, sink into insignificance when compared with the celestial elements that enter into the composition of such a character,—with the usefulness of such a life! To the salutary suggestions which Mr. Wesley offers to the consideration of his son in the Gospel, as to the best means of extending the work of God, the feelings, desires, and best endeavours of the latter were responsive. An extract from his Journal, embodying the reflections suggested by a retrospect of the past year, will convey the most correct idea of his spiritual state when the above letter left the hands of the venerated writer :

"January 1st, 1790.—I have been endeavouring to call to mind the mercies temporal and spiritual, with which I am blessed. Among the most signal of a *temporal* nature, I place—health—my recovery in the course of the past year from a threatened consumption—preservation amidst great dangers both by sea and land—easy circumstances with respect to the world—an agreeable, pious, prudent and faithful companion, three fine children, and a circle of kind, oblig-

ing friends. Among my *spiritual*—the Lord's counting me faithful, putting me into the ministry—the success He has granted to my poor endeavours in the conversion of many souls, and in gladdening the hearts of many of His people both in Philadelphia, Halifax and various parts of this province. His placing me among so loving and lively a people as those of Halifax now are—His quickening and consoling presence in preaching, prayer and other religious duties—His enabling me in patience to possess my soul (I cannot recollect that I have spoken an angry word to any one for years)—the measure of the faith that worketh by love, and of the hope that purifies the heart, which I possess—my desire to do all things to the glory of God—my longings after full sanctification of soul and body—and a blessed expectation of seeing Jesus and dwelling with him for ever in heaven. I next endeavoured to recall my sins to mind, and to humble myself before God on account of them : and here I found as great cause for self-abasement, as before, for wonder, love and praise. Oh ! the odious pride, self-seeking, vain thoughts, the unbelief, backwardness to study, to prayer, to self-examination, and bearing the cross ; the barrenness and lukewarmness of most, I might say of *all*, even my most fervent and hearty services ; the spiritual plagues I was convinced still remained in my heart ; my proneness to forget God, and return ingratitude for his matchless love and grace ; my want of zeal for his glory, and of ardent love for souls, my misspent time, lost opportunities of doing and getting good, &c. &c. &c. After all, my heart is far from being suitably affected with either my mercies or sins. Vile heart ! ungrateful soul ! fall prostrate in the dust before God. O Jesus ! let me

make a believing use of Thy blood ; let it sprinkle my heart from an evil conscience, and keep it ever clean. What avail all my purposes and resolutions unless constantly upheld by Thee. If Thy hand support me not, I must fall. I know not what may lie concealed in the womb of the future respecting me, to be manifested this year ; but I willingly commit the entire disposal of all my concerns, whether relating to my soul, body or family, into the hands of infinite wisdom and love. The Judge of all the earth will do right.

‘Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.’

In time—in *eternity*, let me only enjoy Thee, serve Thee and it is enough : not my will, but thine be done.”

The advantages which Mr. Black anticipated from receiving ordination were soon apparent in the fresh interest and impulse communicated to his ministrations by his administering the sacraments, particularly that of the Lord’s Supper, among those who had received with meekness the ingrafted word. The desires so naturally excited in their minds to receive the emblems of a Saviour’s death, from the hands which had broken the bread of life to their souls, were thus met, and their union, edification and comfort, greatly promoted. Nor was the celebration of this impressive ordinance less influential in quickening and consoling his own mind. As frequently as it returned, it arrayed the doctrines of the cross in all their freshness, power and glory before his mind, brought them home with overwhelming effect to his bosom, and thus infused an energy and a tenderness into his exhibition of them, which told on the feelings of all who heard him. With him the celebration of the Eucharist was not the

cold observance of an official duty, nor the affecting commemoration merely of the *fact* of the sacrificial death of Christ, but the conscious and blessed communion of the body and blood of his once crucified but now living Redeemer. If the individual whose eye is passing over this page be one who has been present on such occasions, we envy him not, if he can remember them without emotion; while by the serious reader, whoever he may be, the following sacramental meditation cannot but be appreciated as the emanation of a heart richly imbued with redeeming love, and a pathetic memento of the spirit in which he ought at all times to approach the table of the Lord.

“ Saturday, 20th Feb.—My gracious Lord, on the morrow I am to administer to thy people the emblems of thy broken body and shed blood. Give me grace to do it in a reverent and solemn manner. O let me once more look through the sacred signs, and discern the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Let me eat the bread of life—the manna that comes down from heaven, and feast on Thy redeeming love. Let me drink of the river of pleasures and of life that proceedeth from Thy wounded side—Thy pierced heart—for Thy flesh is meat indeed, and Thy blood is drink indeed.

“ I have been exhorting Thy people to come to Thy Table, in a penitent, believing, thankful and joyful manner, there to commemorate Thy strange, mysterious, boundless love; and O blessed Jesus! shall I myself approach it without such feelings? Did the ancient Romans, when they beheld the robe of their murdered Cæsar all stained with his blood, rise in indignation against those who had slain him? and shall I see the robes, the very robes of my precious Re-

deemer, all rolled in blood, covered with purple gore, and not feel my indignation kindle against my sins, that made my divine Lord and Master bleed and groan and die ! O the pains, the anguish, the woes that oppressed Thy tender, sinless heart ! *The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He gave himself a ransom for all.* Amazing stoop of Majesty Divine ! And is it so ? Can it be ? All glory to redeeming love, eternal truth hath spoken it. He died, my soul, a sacrifice for sin, for *thy* sin, that freed from sin, thou mightst no longer serve it. I go then, O Lord, to thy table—to Thee I pray—after Thee I breathe forth my desires. O slay, slay these dire remains of sin ; let not thy murderers live in my heart. Now lead me into Thy banqueting house, and let Thy banner over me be love. When shall I say— ‘The winter is past, the rains are over and gone, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.’ O Lord, I beseech Thee show me thy glory.”

Such utterances of the heart disclose the secret of Mr. Black's great success in the conversion of souls. Labours pervaded and animated with such hallowed feeling could not be unproductive. In Halifax, indeed, where the principal part of his time had for some years been spent, the work did not advance with as much rapidity as in some other places. It was an auspicious feature of the cause in the metropolis, however, that it was exempt from the noxious influence of those false doctrines, by which the souls of many had been subverted in other scenes of his ministerial labours and success. The history of few Christian churches has in this respect exhibited, from its origin,

greater stability than the Methodist society of Halifax, which has had many pious and able instructors in Christ, but only one father—the honoured subject of these memoirs. Several of the country societies, whom the plan of his labour led him to visit two or three times in the course of the year, were, as we have already seen, from their juxta-position to the class of Christians, with whom Mr. Alline's most monstrous errors had all the authority of oracles, in danger of being tainted with the moral malaria. Even where this effect did not follow, he could not view, without the most painful concern, the diffusion of principles so utterly at variance with "the form of sound words," and subversive of the very elements of Christian morality, as—that the Bible is an old dead letter—ordinances are neither obligatory nor useful—the resurrection is past already—believers may indulge in the grossest immoralities—they may commit murder and adultery, and their souls at the same time be free from moral turpitude. Can it be matter of surprise to the reader, that referring to the apparently gracious influence which attended the inculcation of some fundamental truths of the Gospel in connection with such revolting dogmas, Mr. Black should thus express himself—"I find it hard work to rejoice in the success of Mr. H—, under whose ministry it is said some are converted, because many of his doctrines are unscriptural, and he is violently opposed to us:" "however," he adds, "if Christ is preached, and sinners are converted, I will bless God for this. So many more are added to my Father's family: therefore I will rejoice though they not only do not follow us, but think it their duty to oppose us." No zeal but that which is "the pure flame of LOVE" could achieve a

moral triumph like this. Notwithstanding these unpropitious circumstances, he found the state of the societies throughout the province, during his summer visit this year, in no place discouraging; in some, especially at Shepody, the prospect was invigorating. Mr. Wesley had often desired Mr. Black to furnish him with a circumstantial delineation of the state of the work in Nova Scotia, in all its departments. The Report drawn up and forwarded, at an early period of this year, in accordance with that request, Mr. Wesley acknowledges in a letter, to which the tremulousness of age has given so chaotic an appearance as to have rendered it a task of considerable difficulty to decipher it. It is dated *Sunderland, June 14th, 1790*, only nine months before his death:—

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ You did well to send me an account of your little societies. Here is a good beginning, though it is as yet in many places a day of small things; and although it does not please God to carry on his work so rapidly with you as in some of the provinces, (United States.) But one soul is worth all the merchandise in the world: and whoever gets money, do you win souls.

“ Never was there throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, so great a thirst for the pure word of God as there is at this day. The same we find in the little Islands of Man, Wight, Jersey, Guernsey, and Alderney in the Western Ocean. In the Isle of Man alone (thirty miles long) the societies contain about four-and-twenty hundred members. I have just now finished my route through Scotland, where I never had such congregations before. So it pleases

God to give me a little more to do before He calls me hence.

“What has become of brother Scurr, Dobson, and our other Yorkshire friends? Some of them doubtless are gone into a farther country; but some I suppose remain. I doubt you do not keep up a constant intercourse with each other. Love as Brethren!

“I am,

“Dear William,

“Your affectionate friend and Brother,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

Mr. Black never hesitated to waive his own predilections in accommodation to the prejudices of others when the surrender involved no compromise of principle, and appeared necessary, or conducive to his usefulness. Thus, though convinced of the scriptural validity of *sprinkling* as the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, he often, in conformity with the views of an adult candidate, performed it by immersion. It is not very creditable to the Christian cause that this subject has been so prolific a source of *odium theologicum*, theological dispute and acrimony. Were *Pedobaptists*, when expedient, to act on the principle of Mr. Black, and *Baptists* to evince more of the candour and conciliation of one whose name is an honour and their denomination—the late Rev. Robert Hall—there would be more ground to hope, than at present exists, that, by a mutual approximation, Christians now so widely severed, would ere long cordially unite, if not in accordance of sentiment in this point, at least in showing forth the redeeming love and sacrificial death of the same Lord, both their’s and our’s. That eloquent

and powerful apologist of "free communion," in vindication of his impugned sincerity as a Baptist, observes: "The primitive, the regular, and proper mode of administration, I take to be *immersion*. Still it appears to me that sprinkling, though an innovation, does not deprive baptism of its essential validity, so as to put the person who has been sprinkled *in adult age* upon a footing with the unbaptized. The whole of my sentiments amount to this,—I would not myself baptize in any other manner than by immersion, because I look upon immersion as the ancient mode, that it best represents the meaning of the original term employed, and the substantial import of this institution; and because I should think it right to guard against the spirit of innovation, which in positive rites is always dangerous and progressive: *but I should not think myself authorised to rebaptize any one who has been sprinkled in adult age.*"* If these remarks tend in any measure to subserve the cause of Christian charity, their object will be attained: they were suggested by the following brief entry in Mr. Black's Journal, under date of July 15th:—"I baptized by *immersion* the wife of John Weldon, Esq., after preaching to about three hundred people, who accompanied us to the water singing. It was a solemn time."

The care of the churches under Mr. Black's superintendence was constantly becoming more onerous; and the supply of ministerial help was far from being adequate to the wants and wishes of the people. Anticipating the most effectual alleviation of his perplexity, on certain subjects intimately connected with the interests of the work entrusted to his oversight, from a free and personal consultation with Dr. Coke, and as

* Letter to the Broadmead Church, written Dec. 9th, 1790.

the American connection was the only source to which he could look for the required assistance, he resolved, with a view to accomplish both these objects, to attend the New York Conference, to be held the last week in May, 1791. Soon after his arrival at New York he learned that the Doctor's paramount engagements or duties in Europe, (arising probably out of Mr. Wesley's recent death) would preclude the possibility of his remaining in America as long as he had intended. He therefore hastened forward to Philadelphia, where he met the Dr. on the 11th of May. He enjoyed the desired interview, and derived from it all the benefit in the way both of counsel and encouragement which he had anticipated. The unexpected extension of his journey, also, afforded him an opportunity of being present at the Philadelphia Conference, which commenced on the 17th of May, and occupied four days. The venerable Asbury presided; and the wisdom, grace and prudence with which he sustained his character as a Christian Bishop, made a deep impression upon Mr. Black's mind. The New York Conference sat the following week, at which six preachers were designated to accompany Mr. Black to Nova Scotia. The immediate objects of his visit were thus auspiciously attained, and looking forward to its ulterior consequences, he thanked God and took courage.

The year 1791 was one of the most memorable in Mr. Black's life. About three weeks after his return from the States, in pursuance it would seem of an arrangement suggested by Dr. Coke, he sailed from Halifax for Newfoundland. The remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit which attended his labours, transient though they were, in that Island, formed a

new era in the history of his ministerial usefulness, and was among the most refreshing reminiscences with which 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent' solaced the evening of his days. He arrived at St. John on the 10th of August, and immediately waited on the Rev. Mr. Jones, the Presbyterian minister of that place, a man deeply pious and of a most catholic spirit. After spending a day at St. John, he repaired to Carbonear, where Mr. McGeary, a Methodist Missionary, was then stationed. By him he was hailed with the liveliest emotions of gratitude and joy.—“I have been weeping before the Lord,” said he, “I have been weeping before the Lord, over my lonely situation and the darkness of the people, and your coming is like life from the dead!” The good man was indeed so completely disheartened that he was just on the point of abandoning the field in which he had for a considerable time laboured without fruit, as irreclaimably sterile. A most gracious revival had indeed taken place here a number of years previously, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Coughlan, but a portion of its fruits had been lodged in the celestial garner, and a few females were all who at this period remained, to testify that Christ had power on earth to forgive sins. Mr. Black deeply felt that the cause of God had reached a crisis, the duties of which demanded unusual unction and fidelity; and from the time that he left Halifax, his Journal attests that his mind was in a state of progressive preparation for the work here assigned him to do. He entered upon it under a profound consciousness of his own insufficiency; but with fervent prayer and importunate supplication, to his Father who saw in secret, and he was soon rewarded openly. A blessed influence attended

his very first sermon—a cheering prelude of the time of gracious visitation that followed. But the toils and the triumphs of this season of grace will be best exhibited by some extracts gleaned from his Journal:—

“Carbonear, Sunday, Aug. 14th.—Last evening I preached from Acts 2 : 42. Many present were, I believe, convinced of their foul revolt ; some of whom appear resolved to set out anew. Some also who never knew the ways of God seemed deeply affected. O my God, I trust Thou didst not send me hither for nothing. I had much liberty in preaching this morning. The power of the Spirit of God was amongst the people. After preaching, I requested any who desired to devote themselves to God to remain and meet in class : about thirty-seven did so. In the evening I had a crowded audience. I trust the Lord will make bare His arm. I have now no doubt but God in mercy sent me to this people.

“Wednesday, 17th.—While I was preaching in Carbonear Church last evening, some began to cry aloud. I ceased preaching and began to pray. My voice was nearly drowned. Weeping was on every side. I left the pulpit, and passed through the church, exhorting those who were wounded and crying for mercy. All over the chapel, three or four were to be seen in almost every pew thus affected. One experienced comfort, and published her joys aloud. After they dispersed, their cries and groans might be heard at a considerable distance up and down the harbour.—I this morning visited the female who found peace last evening. She was engaged in praising God : joy shone in her countenance and sparkled in her eyes. I then accompanied brother Stretton, a judicious and upright

man, to Harbour Grace, about six miles from Carbonear, and preached in the evening in the church he had built at his own expense. Before we parted the spirit of conviction was poured out upon the people here, much in the same manner as at Carbonear. Some of them followed me to brother Stretton's, where we sung and prayed until my strength was nearly exhausted. There is a general concern for salvation throughout this place, especially among the young. May they know the day of their visitation. O God, carry on Thy work, and enable me to be faithful.

'Tis worth living for this—
To administer bliss,
And salvation in Jesus's name.'

“Friday, 19th.—Preached in the Carbonear church in the evening. About thirty persons came in a boat to attend the meeting. The same feeling was again manifested. Three more profess to have experienced converting grace. May none snatch at comfort until administered by the Spirit of God. I was called upon to visit a woman in great spiritual distress. So bitter was the remembrance of her sins that she refused to be comforted; but Thou, Lord, art able to heal!

“Sabbath, 21st.—After preaching in the morning to about 300 people at Port a Grave, I addressed nearly the same number at Bay Roberts in the afternoon. Here I found twenty-six who met in class, but not regularly; of these, few enjoy the consolation of experimental godliness. I added four to their number, furnished them with a class-paper, explained the rules of the society, and left them in the charge of George Vey, the leader, a pious young man, who I trust will be a blessing to them. With the deplorable

condition of the people generally here, I was much affected.

“ Monday, 22d.—I preached in the church at Harbour Grace from John iii: 16. So powerful a season I have not seen since I came to the Island. For three hours in succession between forty and fifty deeply lamented their sins, and continued their supplications for mercy. I cannot but observe and adore the goodness of God in sending me hither, and that by a train of providences. It is not quite a fortnight since my arrival at Carbonear—and *What hath God wrought!*

“ On Thursday the 25th, Brother McGeary and I set off in a small boat for Black-head. We arrived in time to give a word of exhortation to a few who had come together expecting us, and appointed a meeting for the following evening. This was a time long to be remembered. Acts xi: 15, was my text, and it was indeed fulfilled. The Holy Ghost fell upon the people, both as a Spirit of bondage to fear, and as a Spirit of liberty and love.

“ Tuesday, 30th.—Preached at Fresh-water on the *nature, necessity, and fruits of faith*. Many felt the want of it and wept aloud; others rejoiced in the possession of so invaluable a pearl. I formed those who felt the importance of Christian communion into two classes. In years past several of them had known the Lord; I trust the Lord has healed the backslidings of many, and that they will be in future preserved from the snare of the devil. May they learn wisdom from the things they have suffered. There are now at Carbonear, including this place, fifty who will meet in class, twelve of whom have been enabled to believe to the saving of their souls in this revival.

“ September 1st.—I walked over to Harbour Grace,

accompanied by Richard Valentine. His conversation was truly spiritual and instructive ; various and heavy have been his trials. His experience is not only scriptural but deep. He has been many years in the way ; and has moved steadily along amidst outward trials and inward exercises peculiarly severe. May I drink more deeply into his spirit. In the evening I preached from, "*We will go with you ; for we have heard that the Lord is with you.*" I pointed out the following as among the marks by which those who have God with them may be distinguished :— (1) They embrace and hold forth the essential doctrines of Scripture—as, original sin—justification by faith—the new birth—and entire holiness or sanctification. (2) In connexion with their zeal in propagating these wholesome truths, the glory of God and the salvation of men, are the objects for which they live. (3) By their instrumentality men are actually reformed, as well in the temper of their minds as in their outward behaviour. Having enlarged on these particulars, I endeavoured to show the necessity of *going with* such a people, so far at least as believingly to receive those doctrines, reduce them to practice, and to aid with all our might in spreading their influence.

"Monday, 5th.—I know not that I ever witnessed such a meeting as we had this evening. Brother Stretton emphatically remarked,—'The scene was truly awful. What a contrast ! Some in the very depths of distress ; others in transports of joy ! It appeared to me a faint picture of heaven and hell !' Several found peace with God this evening also. Some of those under conviction have been among the greatest enemies of religion. Nothing was to be seen but heaving breasts and weeping eyes !—nothing to be heard but

prayer and praise, expressions of repentance or of faith, of joy or of sorrow ! *Part* of this excitement may be natural or animal, may arise from sympathy ; but it is evident *much* of it is *divine*. None but God can alarm the guilty, slumbering conscience of fallen man, enlighten his understanding and make him sensible of his vileness ; can draw his affections from earth and fix them upon heavenly objects ; can fill his soul with meekness, patience, resignation—with contentment, peace and joy—with faith, hope and love. None, I say, but God, can produce these. But these are produced ; therefore thus far the work is evidently of God, although some of its *attendants* or *appendages* may be from nature, yea from Satan.”

To chronicle all the occurrences of interest that transpired during this eventful visit, or even to advert to the numerous cases of conversion in which Mr. Black gives the names of the individuals, would draw out these details to a disproportionate length. Those already exhibited amply evince the extraordinary impression produced under the divine blessing, by his ministry in Newfoundland, “ the result” of which,—in the words of the Rev. Richard Knight, seventeen years of whose highly useful missionary life were spent in that scene of labour—“ was a large accession to the Methodist Society, and the dawn of that brighter day which has since shone upon our Mission in that island.” “ No less,” says Mr. Knight, “ than two hundred souls were converted to God during his brief sojourn in Conception Bay. Nor are the fruits of that visit to be estimated by its immediate results. He organized Methodism, settled the Mission properly, and secured it to the Connexion, increased and inspired the society, and obtained for them the help

they needed." The feelings with which he took his departure from a people, hundreds of whom he justly anticipated the joy of presenting perfect in Christ Jesus at his second coming, will be adequately conceived only by the faithful minister on whom God has bestowed at least a portion of such honour and happiness. "I think," he writes, "I never had so affecting a parting with any people before in my life. It was hard work to tear away from them. I was nearly an hour shaking hands with them, some twice and thrice over: and even then we hardly knew how to part; but I at last rushed from among them, and left them weeping as for an only son." Let me add, though God enabled him thus to triumph in Christ Jesus, and so signally made known by him, in every place he visited on the Island, the savour of His grace, even the keen-eyed sceptic would be unable to detect the slightest tincture of self-complacency mingling with the angelic emotions awakened by the heart-thrilling review. As he opened he also closed his commission among this people—in a spirit of deep humility and unreserved consecration to God. "My heart pants," says he, just as his foot for the last time pressed their rocky shore—"My heart pants after perfect purity;" and then gives utterance to its aspirations in the expressive language of the poet,

' Take my soul and body's powers,
 Take my memory, mind, and will;
 All my goods, and all my hours,
 All I know, and all I feel;
 All I think, or speak, or do:
 Take my heart! but make it new!

In this changeful and disciplinary state of existence, it is not unfrequently the case that occurrences of a

nature the most felicitous, are to the Christian the harbingers of some of his severest trials. This is wisely ordained. The fiery ordeal, while it tests the genuineness, at the same time increases the purity and lustre of his graces. An unintercepted series of prosperous and pleasing events, though in connection with the church of God, is not favourable to the cultivation of that humble and prayerful dependence upon Him, essential to the maintenance and growth of the spiritual life. To St. Paul, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations communicated to him, there was given a thorn in the flesh; and the only response he received to his importunate application for its removal was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." This was enough. His infirmities increased, in the same ratio, his claims upon celestial succour; and like an advantageous foil, more strikingly illustrated the reality and power of the grace imparted to him. The reader will readily anticipate the drift of these remarks. It might be said of Mr. Black, during his stay in Newfoundland, that he rode as in a triumphal chariot. No imaginable concurrence of temporal circumstances could have enkindled an exultation in his mind comparable to that which he experienced from a survey of the auspicious and extensive change his labours there had been instrumental in effectuating. On his return to Nova Scotia, however, he was destined to encounter trials of no ordinary magnitude. The preaching-house, hitherto occupied in Halifax by Mr. Black and his coadjutors, was the property of Mr. M—, then the most opulent and influential person connected with the society. Owing to circumstances affecting this gentleman, the nature of which we neither know,

nor have any wish to resuscitate, his connection with Methodism had ceased during Mr. Black's absence. His alienation unhappily soon assumed the character of positive hostility against the sacred cause which he had for a considerable period generously cherished and supported. With a view to gratify the unhallowed feeling which had taken possession of his mind, by involving the society in as much inconvenience and perplexity as possible, he would on no terms allow them the use of the chapel. In vain did Mr. Black seriously and affectionately remonstrate with him on the impropriety of his course, and deprecate the consequences to the society of their being so abruptly deprived of their accustomed place of worship; he would entertain no proposals, but remained indomitable in his determination neither to rent nor to sell it for *their* accommodation. This machination of Satan to injure the cause of God in so important a position, signally failed. In fact it most materially subserved its interests by calling forth the latent zeal, energies and resources of its friends in a manner in which we may safely assert, they would not have been developed at that early period without some impulsive stimulant. There was no alternative but the erection of a new chapel. And however improbable the accomplishment of this object, on a respectable scale, might at first view appear, the promptitude and liberality with which those, to whom the subscription-list for the purpose was first presented, responded to the call, were too cheerfully prophetic of the result to admit of doubt or discouragement. £100 were raised in one day; and an amount soon subscribed which authorised the adoption of immediate measures for carrying the project into effect.

Soon after Mr. Black's return from Newfoundland he visited in order, Horton, Granville, Annapolis, and Digby, and then passed over to St. John, N. B. The Rev. Mr. Bishop, probably one of the holiest men who ever lived, was at that time stationed in the city. Under his ministry several had been converted to God, and others were enquiring the way to Zion. The ashes of this excellent man, whose memory is blessed, repose in one of the West India Islands, whither he afterwards went to invite into the glorious liberty of the children of God, the injured sons of Africa. In St. John, Mr. Black's "time," to use his own expressions, was "all taken up between the mount and multitude." But in his efforts to benefit the latter, he experienced an unexpected interruption, the nature and cause of which were as follows. Walking the street on the Lord's day, he saw certain ship-builders and caulkers pursuing their ordinary employments. Against this public desecration of the Sabbath, he felt it his duty to bear his testimony, in terms of merited reprobation, in his discourse in the evening. Exasperated by the exposure of their guilt, some of the individuals implicated, aware of the existence of a provincial statute against any one's exercising ministerial functions without a license from the Governor, and having ascertained that the preacher had not used the precaution to procure such a license, thought it would be a worthy method of expressing their resentment—if possible to seal the lips which had testified of them that their deeds were evil. Accordingly they preferred a charge of contempt of the law against him to the Clerk of the Peace, whose zeal in promoting their views must be admitted to have been a little more ardent than fidelity to his official responsibilities really

demand. He immediately sent a note to Mr. Black, of which the following is a copy :—

To Rev. Mr. Black.

“ SIR,

“ You are, I doubt not, acquainted with an act of the General Assembly of this province which inflicts a penalty upon any person who shall presume to preach, &c. without a license for that purpose under the hand and seal of the Governor or Commander in Chief for the time being. As Clerk of the Peace for this city, I conceive it my duty to enquire whether you are in possession of any such license.

“ I am, &c.

“ E. HARDY,

“ *Clerk of the Peace.*”

Three hours after the above was handed to Mr. Black, he waited on the writer at his office, and stated to him,—that immediately on his arrival in the province he had consulted two of the principal magistrates of the city respecting the law in question, who assured him that it never was designed to prevent any minister regularly ordained, and of sober character, from communicating religious knowledge; and that, in their estimation, it would be quite sufficient for him to transmit the credentials of his ordination to the Governor, who, they made no doubt, would give him a license. In conformity with this suggestion, he further informed the Clerk of the Peace, that he had forwarded to his Excellency a copy of his ordination credentials signed by Judges LUDLOW, and UPHAM, the latter of whom accompanied them with his recom-

mendation, and at the same time remarked to him (Mr. Black) that as it was at the desire of a respectable body of people he preached, no one could look upon his compliance, under all the circumstances, as indicating a contempt of the Provincial Legislature; adding that the Governor had, to his knowledge, in a similar case, referred to the magistrates, and that the professed object of the act was to *secure*, not *abridge* liberty of conscience, or the sacred right of all persons to worship God according to the dictates of their judgment. "From these considerations," said Mr. Black, "I have ventured to preach at the request of the people, and intended to do so until I should hear from the Governor; but since my conduct has been construed into contempt of authority, I shall desist until I hear from the Rev. Mr. Bishop, who has gone to wait upon his Excellency." To all this Mr. Hardy replied, with considerable warmth, that neither the magistrates nor the Governor himself had any right to dispense with the Law; expressed his surprise at such observations, and throwing the statute before Mr. Black, said,—'You may examine it for yourself,' and abruptly left the office. The opponents of Methodism, or rather of the Gospel, thus gained a malignant triumph, and emboldened by success, became loud in their boastings, and predicted that the benevolent object of their hate would speedily be looking through the grates of the prison. But none of these things moved him. Interdicted from holding forth the word of life, *publicly*, he endeavoured as far as practicable to accomplish the objects of his mission by pastoral visitation, as well as preaching, *from house to house*. More than a fortnight elapsed, and no license or information from the seat of government arrived, most

ralities. £110 were cheerfully subscribed towards the erection of a chapel, the frame of which Mr. Black saw out of the woods before he left. At this Conference the returns from the various circuits showed an aggregate of six hundred and eighty members.

From the Conference he went to Annapolis, where inauspicious occurrences had almost prostrated the little society. By the formation of a matrimonial alliance, prompted, there is reason to fear, by the motive that led Demas to forsake the Apostles, the preacher at that place (Mr. C.) had lost the confidence of those over whom he had been placed, and inflicted a wound upon the cause which time has not healed. The manner in which he received, or rather repelled Mr. Black's affectionate admonition, was painfully ominous of the result. How fearful is the responsibility of ministers! When they fall, the catastrophe resembles the extinction of a central orb, rather than the aphelion of an isolated star.

Mr. Black now visited the city of St. John, under circumstances more agreeable than those under which he had left it the preceding December. He found that Mr. Bishop's labours in the meantime had been greatly blessed. There were about seventy in the society, and the work was still progressive. Proceeding to Fredericton he found a class of twenty-two, chiefly soldiers who "thought upon the name" of the Lord, "and spake often one to another." The few days he remained with them were not without happy consequences—their number increased to thirty. At Sheffield, between St. John and Fredericton, he preached at the house of Mr. Hammond, in whose family, as indeed in the surrounding neighbourhood, there had recently been a powerful work of divine grace. "Among

these," he remarks with pain, "there are many New-lights, or more properly *Allinities*—much wild fire, and many wrong opinions. They want a judicious leader, one who can 'rightly divide the word of truth.'" We next find him spending a few days with Mr. McColl and his little flock at St. Stephen's, much gratified at witnessing the spirituality manifested by the society under the pastoral care of that truly venerable man. The compiler of this memoir cannot pass over in silence the name of a departed father in Israel, with whom it was his providential lot to be intimately associated during the first twelve months of his ministerial itinerancy. He here uses the word *providential* advisedly, emphatically, and with fervent gratitude to Him who has been the guide of his youth. From the contemplation of the character, as well as from the conversation, kindness, and counsel of that excellent man, he derived much spiritual benefit, when little more than a babe in Christ; nor could he now bend over the grave that embosoms his hallowed dust without emotions of filial tenderness and veneration. The circumstances of Mr. McColl's conversion to God were very remarkable. At an early period in life he entered the army, without any knowledge of vital godliness even in theory. Whatever religious instruction he had received related merely to external propriety of deportment. Nor had he any higher conception of the nature of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord, till the eyes of his understanding were almost miraculously enlightened. This occurred on the eve of a naval engagement (the place and occasion have escaped my recollection) in which he apprehended that he might be in a moment ushered into the presence of God. Finding an opportunity before the action

commenced to pour out his anguished soul in prayer, he earnestly implored mercy and a preparation for death. His prayer was heard. God shone into his troubled mind with overwhelming glory. In a moment the darkness and the dismay were gone; and the first intimation he received of the truth of experimental religion was by feeling "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him." Amazed at the transformation he had experienced, and equally astonished that the minister under whose ministry he had many years sat in Scotland, had never inculcated the necessity of such a spiritual change, he was prompted by the ardour of his first love to address a letter to him, in which he faithfully asked him, after relating his own experience, whether it was possible he could be ignorant of a point so essential as the necessity of being 'born again,' or whether knowing it, he could forbear to inculcate it on his hearers as indispensable to their salvation. Several years elapsed, if I remember right, before he met with any one who appeared to understand the things of the Spirit of God. It was not until he formed the acquaintance of some members of the Methodist society that he enjoyed the privilege of spiritual fellowship. Immediately he was attracted to them, and cast in his lot among them. There was nothing in his religious sentiments to prevent at once the most perfect union; for it is remarkable that although educated a Calvinist, from the moment he felt the love of God, he believed the same blessing was FREE FOR ALL. On his retiring from the army he settled at St. Stephen's in New Brunswick. There he became a most useful minister of Christ, and after holding forth to a numerous congregation the word of life for nearly forty years,

departed in the faith, to wear the crown of righteousness laid up for him in heaven. Hundreds of unfading gems, the fruits of his faithful ministry, will illustrate that crown in the day of the Lord Jesus.—Independent of the feelings and motives by which I have been actuated in paying this imperfect tribute to departed excellence, it can hardly be deemed a digression in delineating the history of one whose life is in fact the history of Methodism in New Brunswick and the sister Province.

From St. Stephen's Mr. Black returned again to St. John in May. Mr. Bishop's time in the city was now expired. His valedictory address produced such an effect as might be expected from the operation, at a moment so impressive, of the mutual attachment between a holy minister and a people, most of whom were his spiritual children, and to all of whom the lustre of his example and the fidelity of his ministrations had been singularly useful. The parting scene (which took place on the 16th of May) is thus described by Mr. Black : " Brother Bishop preached a farewell sermon : I then gave a discourse on the Lord's Supper, and administered the ordinance ; after which brother McColl gave an exhortation. O what a time ! very similar to the scene on a like occasion in Newfoundland. Going round among the people the next day, I found them deeply distressed at the thought of losing dear Mr. Bishop, whose memory they have indeed cause to love."

Thence Mr. Black proceeded to Remsheg (now called Wallace.) A gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit had attended the labours of Mr. Grandine in this section of the country the preceding winter ; and the effects of the divine visitation were the more conspi-

eous from the previous ignorance of the things of God, and total inattention to moral and religious duties that had prevailed among the people. The work was as permanent as it was powerful. Almost all its subjects who remained steadfast, have 'passed through death triumphant home;' and by the few that yet linger on this side Jordan, the name of Mr. Grandine is still pronounced with affectionate veneration. When Mr. Black 'came, and had seen the grace of God, he was glad;' and visiting the various parts of the circuit which Mr. Grandine had formed, 'he exhorted them that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord.' On his return to Halifax, the work of God presented a most cheering aspect in town. Several souls had been truly converted, and others were earnestly enquiring the way to Zion. "Tuesday, 28th of August," he writes—"For the last fortnight I have had plenty of work in visiting the friends. The work still spreads—more are awakened—more are converted—and almost every day new members are added to the society. Last night I was called out of bed at 12 o'clock to praise God for the deliverance of one who had been ten days under deep convictions. I never saw a person more happy. O how powerful is the grace of God when it powerfully reigns in the heart!"

In accordance with Dr. Coke's request, Mr. Black made arrangements to attend the General Conference at Baltimore; and sailed for Philadelphia on the 19th of October. He endeavoured to render himself as useful to the Captain and crew as possible; and was treated by them with marked respect. Tuesday the 30th, while at sea, he says—"Most of my time since I came on board has been occupied in reading, chiefly

Flavel's Treatise on the soul, Littleton's Roman History and Knox's Essays. Lord let none of them prove unprofitable!" To some this petition may appear superfluous, if not preposterous. 'What imaginable injury they will think could accrue from the perusal of such works as those of Littleton and Knox?' 'Does it not indicate imbecility and enthusiasm to anticipate any injurious moral influence from volumes so instructive and admirable in themselves as those specified?' Such persons are incapable of appreciating the spiritual sensibility of a mind like Mr. Black's, or the tendency of works, whether of literature or mere morality, to impair a realizing sense of divine things, unless counteracted by much vigilance and prayer. The candid confession of the intellectually-great Robert Hall, in his Sermon on the danger of evil communications, annihilates the allegation of mental weakness in the case, and is highly monitory: "I recollect some years ago," he says, "that upon reading some very popular tales (Moral Tales they are styled,) the talent of which is exceedingly great, but which are distinguished by the total absence of religion, and the want of all reference to it even in the scenes of death, the influence on my mind was such that, during the time devoted to that reading, it was with great difficulty and perplexity I was able to discharge my ministerial duties. It became, therefore, painfully evident to me, that to be conversant long with trains of thought or associations of ideas from which religion is entirely excluded, is of most dangerous tendency." From moralists like Johnson and Addison (nor would we by any means exclude Knox) much indeed may be learned by the most devout Christian, calculated not only to inform his under-

standing and taste, but to make him better acquainted with his own heart. An example of this occurs in Mr. Black's journal, in connection with the entry from which we have given the above extract. He there expresses his obligations to God for the benefit he derived from a perusal of Addison's three papers on the Love of Fame. He probably enlarged his acquaintance with the insidious operation of that antagonist principle of humility before God.

Mr. Black did not arrive at Baltimore till the 5th of November, when he found the Conference had been in session three days. He was more successful than he anticipated in the leading object of his visit, having obtained five or six preachers for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. Doctor Coke was extremely desirous that he should assume the charge of the missions in the windward West India Islands; in consequence of which Mr. Harper, who had laboured some time in that sphere, was appointed as Mr. Black's successor—Presiding Elder of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. He met Mr. Harper in New York on the 25th, and was gratified on an acquaintance with him, to perceive that he possessed estimable qualities which augured favourably for the department of the work over which he was designated to preside. It was deemed expedient that Mr. Black, before removing his family to the West Indies, should accompany Dr. Coke thither, in order to ascertain how the climate was likely to agree with his health. On his passage to his new field of labour he has the following remarks:—

“ December 19th.—I have experienced much comfort this evening in my closet devotions. The Lord very graciously visited me; and I said with the disci-

ples on mount Tabor, 'It is good for me to be here.' I derive encouragement from the thought that infinite wisdom is at the helm of affairs, and guides the wheels of providence : here would I rest. Let me cheerfully go wherever my divine Master sees meet. Were I to consult my inclinations, I would prefer England to any other part of the world, especially to the sultry climes of the West Indies : but it is my desire to walk, not after the will of the flesh, but after the will of my infinitely wise and good God. 'Sovereign of the world, sanctify my will : let all within me be in sweet subjection to thy pleasure !' A thousand times rather would I lose my place in the scale of being, than lose the image of God, and sink into the base drudgery and vassalage of the devil."

Through the goodness of God they arrived in safety at St. Eustatius, on the last day of the year. They immediately waited on the Governor ; but experienced a very cold and repulsive reception. He told them that if they had touched at the Island as strangers on their way to another destination, they should have the protection of Government, but if they attempted to preach, no exertion would be spared to enforce the law against them. "From so despotic a government," says Mr. Black, "where an intolerant and haughty aristocracy bereave the people not only of their civil, but of their religious rights, may the Lord deliver me !" "The little society," he continues, "that was raised here by some of our Preachers who visited this Island a few years ago, but were not permitted to remain, are much scattered. Some of these have suffered much for the cause of Jesus, and are neither ashamed nor discouraged. Others were not able to endure reproach, and scourging at the tail of a cart

through the town, but when persecution arose, fell away. I never was in a place where wickedness was so barefaced and triumphant. You cannot walk the streets but a hundred blasphemies assail your ears, and chill your blood into horror. This, all this can be permitted—but were these poor creatures to spend their breath in prayer and praise, they must be imprisoned, fined, whipped, banished, &c. O where is the fear of God? where is prudence?—justice?—mercy? Will not God be avenged on such Governors as these?”

We select the most prominent incidents connected with his visit to those tropical regions, and shall give them in his own words:—

“January 1st, 1793.—Doctor Coke hired a small vessel to convey us to St. Christopher’s, where we arrived the next morning. We blessed God that we were once more on British ground. Here we have a large society of coloured people, I believe about one thousand five hundred. In the evening the Doctor sailed for St. Vincent’s, having previously heard that our missionary in that Island, Mr. Matthew Lamb, was in prison. The Assembly there it seems have passed a law which, amongst other abominable things, enacts, that no person except a clergyman of the Church of England, shall presume to preach there until he shall have resided on the Island at least twelve months; and even then he shall not be permitted to enter the house of a slave for the purpose of instructing him. Some of the Magistrates, I understand, offered to pay Mr. Lamb’s fine; but he respectfully declined accepting their offer, and cheerfully went to prison. Very right: for another sermon would have exposed him to a heavier fine.

“Thursday, 10th.—I this morning returned from a

short excursion into the country. On Tuesday I dined with Dr. Bull (at St. Kitt's) and preached on his estate; the next day I dined with Mr. Thompson, and also preached to the negroes. I plainly see that great dangers surround the missionaries on those Islands; and unless their hearts are well established with grace they must suffer great loss. They are obliged to mingle so much with white people, who are in general very wicked and utterly averse to spiritual conversation; yet in their own way, courteous and obliging. May I while among them sustain no injury from their conversation; and if I cannot, by prudently introducing religious discourse, do *them* some *good*, may I not be suffered, by casting pearls before swine, to do the *poor slaves harm*, by cutting off our access to them.

“Thursday, 24th.—I have now been upwards of twelve days at St. Nevis. From the relaxation of my nervous system I am much exercised as to whether it is my duty to assume a permanent charge in the West Indies or not. May the Lord direct my unsteady mind to a proper determination! I accompany Dr. Coke to-day to St. Kitt's.

“February 9th.—Our Conference commenced at Antigua: There were thirteen Preachers present. The deliberations occupied eight days. Great blessings, I doubt not, will result from the wholesome regulations that have been adopted, and from the spirit of humility and love that prevailed throughout the debates. It is now determined that I return to St. Kitt's as Presiding Elder of the Leeward Islands. I tremble at my insufficiency for so weighty a charge; but Thou Lord art my help!

“March 4th.—I have just returned from a tour round a considerable portion of the Island, in compa-

ny with Mr. Baxter. I preached four or five times with much comfort. My mind is much happier than while I remained undetermined about coming to the West Indies.

“ Wednesday, 13th.—After taking an affectionate leave of my kind Antigua friends, I sailed for Liverpool, N. S., on board the Aurora, Captain Bartlett. The next day we touched at St. Eustatia, and came to anchor at Anguilla on Friday. I waited on the Governor, who courteously gave me an invitation to dinner, and requested me to make the Government house my home while I remained on the Island. He is a friendly, plain old gentleman. On Sunday, 17th, I read prayers and preached at the Collector’s house. On the 18th, 19th, and 20th I preached, first to a congregation of white people, and then to one of negroes. The congregations gradually increased : some of both colours were affected under the word. Many of them scarcely knew how to express their thankfulness for my visit, although at my first coming they were ready to laugh at the very mention of religious concerns. The Collector and a few of the respectable inhabitants have expressed a desire for a missionary. I think I see the gracious providence of God in unexpectedly bringing me to preach the glad tidings of salvation to these neglected people. I shall certainly entreat Dr. Coke to send a missionary hither as soon as possible. I cannot believe that the seed already sown will be quite lost.”

On the 21st Mr. Black sailed from Anguilla for Liverpool, N. S., where he arrived in safety after a passage of eighteen days, and found the society prospering under the ministry of Mr. Fidler. The growing state of the cause at Liverpool authorised and required

the erection of a suitable place of worship. Mr. Black immediately entered into this object; and in a few days obtained £100 by subscription for the purpose, and the promise of £200 more. On Tuesday the 18th he arrived, through the mercy of God, at Halifax, and had the happiness to find his family and friends well. The joy of the occasion was hallowed by deep devotional feelings. "May all our seasons," he prays, "of meeting and parting but serve to lead our souls more deeply into God, in whom alone is true rest and peace!" He found the new chapel handsomely completed; and while, for the first time, he held forth in it the word of life, the earnest and faithful prayer was that the Lord might "count when he writeth up the people," that many souls were born there; that there thousands might pay their grateful homage to him who bought them with his blood. His official connection with the work in Nova Scotia, for the present at least, was dissolved. He returned merely for the purpose of removing his family to the more insalubrious clime, in which, after some painful struggles of mind, he became convinced it was his duty, at the sacrifice of all his own feelings and predilections, to promote the spiritual emancipation of those injured sons of Africa who, torn by the ruthless hand of commercial cupidity from their native shores, were doomed to drag through life the degrading chain of servitude. Whose heart does not swell with transport at the thought that that chain is *now* broken? Whose lips do not pour forth benedictions on them, by the lightning of whose fearless and flashing eloquence it has been dissolved forever? Eternal blessings on those sons of philanthropy, among whom the immortal Wilberforce ranges pre-eminent, who, at the altar of their God, swore

perpetual hostility against slavery, and never rested until they saw the escutcheon of England purified from its foulest stain!—upon those self-denying men of God, who pioneered the way in this glorious enterprise, and without the preparing influence of whose spiritual labours, the wisdom of the statesman, the eloquence of the orator, and the plans of the Christian philanthropist, could never have so auspiciously achieved it! In these most benevolent and disinterested labours Mr. Black was willing to engage; and the path of duty now seemed plain to him. But how incapable are we of penetrating the future—how uncertain a criterion do our *feelings* often prove as to the course we are destined to fulfill, the *manner* or the *place* in which we ought to serve our generation, by the will of God! The absence of Mr. Black only for a few months had more than satisfied his brethren in Nova-Scotia, that no one, however pious, wise, and assiduous, could exactly supply his place as a General Superintendent of the field which had been so extensively planted and watered by his own exertions. At their Conference, held at Windsor on the 5th and 6th of June, they therefore unanimously adopted a Resolution that a petition should be addressed to Dr. Coke, requesting that brother Black should by no means be removed from Nova Scotia, and stating the reasons on which this request was founded. The application had the desired effect. Much as the Doctor desired to secure his services for the West India missions, he felt at once the irresistible force of the representation made to him by the Nova Scotia brethren, and as unhesitatingly acquiesced in their wishes. Immediately on reaching England, and before he received the petition by which his cherished plan of operation in reference

to the West Indies was so materially changed, he addressed a letter to Mr. Black, dated Falmouth, June 6th, 1793, of which we give the reader an extract :—
“ I am just landed from Jamaica. In the autumn go with your family to New York, Philadelphia, or Boston ; thence to Santa Croix, St. John, or St. Thomas, in an American vessel. Take there a Danish schooner or sloop to carry you to St. Kitt’s. If American vessels trade to Halifax, go in one to the States. Thus will you sail in *neutral* ships all the way. Draw upon me for all necessary expences. When MARTIN comes, if he be not already come, I will see that he is taken care of. I intend to write a circular to the preachers, and a letter to brother Anderson when I have time. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are the *first* upon my list to be visited, in all America. Pray for your faithful friend,” &c. From the date of the above letter, it will readily occur to the reader that the cautionary suggestions it contains for Mr. Black’s guidance, in proceeding to his contemplated destination, naturally arose out of the state of things produced by the war which then commenced, on the part of Great Britain and the allied powers of Germany and Prussia, against France.

Mr. Black, in 1786, expressed himself very favourably in a letter to Mr. Wesley respecting the then Lord Bishop of Nova Scotia ; in reply to which, Mr. W., with what would seem prophetic sagacity, intimated—
“ I do not expect any great matters from the Bishop. I doubt his eye is not single ; and if it be not, he will do little good to you, or any one else.” When Mr. Wesley had gone to his reward this apprehension was painfully realized by Mr. Black. In a Sermon which the Bishop preached on the 9th of June, 1793, he

grossly misrepresented (we trust through ignorance) those who were endeavouring to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. The allusion was obviously to the Methodists; and the attack must have been as harsh as it was gratuitous, since it excited a mind so characteristically mild and gentle as that of Mr. Black, publicly to animadvert upon the equally ungracious and unfounded assertions and insinuations, by which his Lordship thought proper to assail some of *the best friends* to the Church of England's *best interests*. It is painful to relate that about the same time there arrived from England a Church clergyman (Mr. Willowby) who used his utmost efforts to oppose Methodism, publicly denouncing its ministry as unauthorised, and its doctrines as delusive, and treating with supreme arrogance the idea of any union with such fanatics. Our profound respect for the Church of England, and most ardent desire to see her piety elevated to her own standards of faith and duty and devotion, would have induced us to pass in perfect silence over such examples of ecclesiastical impropriety, did we not think their exposure more likely than their suppression to promote the benefit of that very church. And it is certainly with feelings of unfeigned and animated satisfaction that we record, in connection with those developments of "zeal not according to knowledge," a case which presents itself on the very next page of Mr. Black's Journal, affording a refreshing contrast to the spirit of haughty exclusiveness:—On the 2d of October Mr. Black, on his way from Cornwallis to Horton, called on the Rev. Mr. Twining, the Church minister. He was received with the utmost cordiality—not spurned as an enemy, but greeted as 'a brother beloved.' He regarded Mr.

Black as one of those messengers of the churches who are the glory of Christ, and gladly went to hear him preach in the evening. "How different," writes Mr. B., "his spirit from that of Mr. W." Mr. Twining was the subject of that celestial illumination which enabled him to penetrate beneath the surface of religion; to see that modes of church government, as compared with the grand essentials of vital godliness, are subordinate and adventitious—that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." He felt at one period a strong inclination to offer himself to the Methodist Conference, and to become a fellow labourer with those whom some of his brethren regarded as self-constituted and deluded teachers; and we have often heard it stated that Mr. Black, instead of using his influence to draw him away from the church, persuaded him to remain in it, as he would by that means have it in his power to do good to classes of society who were not accessible to a Methodist Minister. After a long ministerial life, during which he occupied in succession several important posts of duty in the province, he died at Liverpool (N. S.) universally respected and lamented. I cannot deny myself the pleasure of stating here that an eminent son of the venerable individual to whom reference has just been made, John Thomas Twining, D. D. of Halifax, in the cultivation of a friendly regard towards the Methodists, and the cause of true Christianity in general, is found walking in the footsteps of his father. As Chaplain of the Garrison—a station which he has filled with great usefulness for a series of years,—it has been in his power very materially to abridge the privileges of the soldiers connected with our society: but

instead of doing so, his influence has invariably been exerted to facilitate their attendance on our evening means of grace which occur almost every day. A most gratifying exhibition of this spirit was afforded by him only a few years since, during a gracious outpouring of the Holy Spirit under the ministry of the Rev. R. Knight, then the superintendent of the Halifax circuit. In the blessings of that time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, none participated so largely as the military : and Dr. Twining, with a generous liberality not always manifested by ministers of the same denomination towards each other, encouraged their unfailing attendance on the means which were evidently so abundantly blessed to their souls. I merely add, what will not surprise the reader, that I have often heard intelligent soldiers remark of the Doctor's preaching, that it is characterised by an affectionate and earnest fidelity that will leave those without excuse to whom it proves "the savour of death unto death." May the Lord signally own and bless his labours among a class of our fellow men so much exposed to temptation ! May hundreds of them rise up on the resurrection morn as spoils won by his instrumentality from the empire of darkness !

On Tuesday, 22d of October, Mr. Black writes :— This day was appointed as a day of public fasting, humiliation and prayer. Much cause indeed have we to humble ourselves before God. The societies in general throughout the country are far from being so lively as heretofore ; nor has the town escaped the declension. Alas ! we have lost much of our first love. The judgments of the Almighty are hanging over our heads—we are every hour looking for an invasion by the French fleet. The militia are called in from the

country to defend us ; but if God be against us, vain is the help of man. A raging fever is spreading through Philadelphia : already has it swept away thousands : one hundred and fifty are said to fall victims to it in a day. Our Governors have adopted every precaution to prevent if possible the contagion from being brought into these provinces ; but God alone can say to it—
‘ Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther.’ ”

Although repeatedly disappointed by providential impediments in his anticipations of seeing Dr. Coke in Nova Scotia, Mr. Black could not bring his mind to resign all hope of the gratification, honour, and benefit of that longed-for event. Nor did he cease to importune the Dr. to redeem the pledge he had given to that effect. His hopes were revived on this subject by the following letter, in which the Dr. alludes to the persecuting law enacted by the Assembly of St. Vincent in language that will thrill through every loyal bosom :—

“ LONDON, NOV. 7, 1793.

“ MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I am very much obliged to you and my other brethren for your kind letter. I will visit you as soon as I can : but it cannot be before the next Conference, as I promised last Conference to take a tour through Ireland next spring and summer. I have strong invitations to Africa. I cannot say whether I must not accept of them before I see you. I long to see you. I will never, God willing ; no, I will never visit your quarter of the Globe again without seeing you. But it was well that I directly returned from Jamaica to England ; otherwise Wm. Hammett would have done

both me and the work in the West Indies perhaps irreparable mischief. But he has not prevailed.

“Our best of Kings, with the advice of his council, has disallowed the persecuting law of St. Vincent’s. It is no more—Glory be to God! Pray daily in public and private for our excellent King. The act was disallowed in consequence of a petition from our General Conference. I am going to Holland on behalf of St. Eustatius. If brother Harper arrive in Nova Scotia for the sake of his health, he is to stay there six months; and I’ll beg of you to supply his place in the West Indies for that time. I hope you have taken out your brother;* you know I have promised if there be deficiencies on his account to supply them. God bless you. My love to sister Black, the brothers Mann, Lunsford, Boyd, &c. &c.

“Your most faithful,

“T. COKE.”

“P. S. I must leave the matter of the West Indies to your judgment. If you think it can be done consistently with the good of the work in Nova Scotia, go for six months, if brother Harper arrives in N. S. But if you think it not compatible with the good of the work in N. S. stay where you are, even if he do come.”

Reinstated by a train of unexpected providential circumstances, in that official relation to the cause in Nova Scotia, &c. which he had so long and efficiently sustained, Mr. Black gave himself afresh to the great object of consolidating and extending the societies and congregations which he had been mainly instrumental

* John Black, Esq. whose character is briefly portrayed on the 203d page of this work.

in originating. In addition to his unweariable labours throughout the province at large during the year 1784, he again visited Prince Edward Island. At Tryon River there had been an extensive revival under the ministry of Mr. Grandine two years previously. "It still increased," says Mr. B. "under the blessing of God, with the little means they had among themselves, until nearly all the Protestants in the village, and some even of the Roman Catholics were awakened. Every thing went on well and gave promise of an universal work, at least amongst the Protestants of the place. But the artful serpent began to play his old game. He who whispered into Eve's ears—'Ye shall not surely die,' began to preach to them unconditional decrees and absolute final perseverance. The consequences have been most injurious to their souls." A few days after he commenced his labours among them indications of good became apparent. On the first Sunday, about twenty made application for admittance into the society. At Charlottetown, he found a class consisting of six or seven who had been united together, and were regularly met at the house of Mr. Benjamin Chappel, by Joshua Newton, Esquire, who at that time had the office of Collector on the Island. Thus early in the history of Methodism in those provinces, do we find this estimable man associated with it, evincing his high appreciation of that branch of its spiritual economy, which Mr. Wesley so justly terms one of its *sineews*, and taking a decided and prominent part in the diffusion of scriptural holiness. In Charlottetown there is now a flourishing Wesleyan Society, a numerous and highly respectable congregation, a commodious and beautiful parsonage, and one of the largest chapels in the Nova Scotia district. How

gratifying to the best feelings of Mr. Newton's heart must it be to look back upon the day when he formed the nucleus of a society second in magnitude and importance only to that of Halifax ; while in the liberality of its contributions for the support of its own ministry, and the extension of the general Missionary cause, it nobly emulates the example of the metropolis of Nova Scotia itself. On the cause of Methodism, to which the approaches of eternity have only served to increase and rivet Mr. Newton's early and uniform attachment, 'his manner of life, faith, purpose, charity,' still shed an adorning lustre. The celestial gem of piety which is sometimes, alas, obscured by the indecorous deportment of its possessors, is seen in him beautifully enchased by intellectual cultivation and true politeness. Whoever has marked his procedure in the public relations of life, enjoyed the intimacies of his personal friendship, or witnessed the consummate order of his household, must have been forcibly reminded of St. Paul's expression—"Love behaveth not itself unseemly." Of the living we ought not perhaps to say *more* ; and we are free to acknowledge that we should have stifled the genuine sentiments of our mind, had respect for the cynic remarks of the fastidious, or an apprehension of the charge of adulation, caused us to say *less*. Distant yet (if such be the will of Heaven) be the day when the hand of the biographer will display his character in all the symmetry of its proportions, or the heart of friendship compose his epitaph.

To return : Mr. Black's reception at Charlottetown by high and low, was truly gratifying. "I waited," he says, "on the Governor, Colonel Fanning, who received me kindly, expressed himself in terms of commendation respecting Mr. Wesley and his people,

and gave me the use of the church. The Governor's secretary, and the Attorney General attended preaching in the evening. Sunday, 12th of October, I again preached twice in the church to a large congregation. At 11 o'clock I had the pleasure of hearing the Rev. Mr. Desbrisay, the clergyman of the town. He delivered a plain, honest discourse, but did not appear to me to have a clear conception of the nature of regeneration. On the 13th, I had a friendly visit from Mr. Desbrisay. It is my desire to cultivate a Christian friendship and all proper union with the ministers of the Church of England. I waited on his Excellency to present my acknowledgements for the use of the church. I spent nearly an hour with him very agreeably; we conversed freely on the advantages of religion to individuals, and society in general. He expressed much friendship, and offers to assist us if we will erect a chapel in Charlottetown.' Such a Governor was admirably fitted to exercise vice-regal authority in a new colony composed of people of various creeds and countries; and the prudent manifestation of the same spirit by the Representatives of Majesty under any circumstances, by giving a character of paternity to the power and pomp of office, would make the standard of the constitution the rallying point to all classes of society. The Rev. Mr. Desbrisay, whom Mr. Black mentions in the preceding extract, was a truly good and amiable man, distinguished for his frankness and urbanity. From a short but interesting acquaintance with him we should think that the canons of criticism were as familiar to him as those of his church, but his manner in the pulpit and out of it, seemed to indicate that he thought both rather rigid. As to the former, the authority of Quintilian

and of Blair combined, could not deter him from using any species of simile or diction in the desk that he deemed best adapted to rouse the consciences or instruct the minds of his audience. In a good old age he was gathered to his fathers in peace, and succeeded by his son-in-law, the Rev. Mr. Jenkins, the present rector of Charlottetown. He has a son, a respectable and devoted Wesleyan Missionary, the Rev. Albert Desbrisay, whose labours have been greatly blessed in various parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The increase of the society, as exhibited by the returns made at the Conference of 1794, which was held at Windsor, was very animating. The number of accredited members now amounted to eleven hundred. Mr. Black's hopes of a visit from Dr. Coke were doomed to be again cut off. Under date of Feb. 6th, 1794, says the Dr.—“I can by no means be absent from the next British Conference. There is a general dissatisfaction running through the whole connection: both preachers and people complain ‘we have no government.’ There is also a general cry among the people for the sacraments among ourselves, and they must be indulged.” He adds the cheering intelligence—“We have had a great revival in and about Halifax, Dewsbury, Bradford and Bristol, in Yorkshire: ten or twelve justified of a day. Cries and tears till two in the morning, as in America.”

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. BLACK PROPOSES TO REMOVE TO ENGLAND—MINISTERS AND POLITICS—DR. BUNTING'S PLEASING TESTIMONY TO MR. BLACK'S DEEP PIETY—DETAILED ACCOUNT OF THE METHODIST SOCIETIES IN NOVA SCOTIA AND NEW BRUNSWICK—THE POWER OF DIVINE GRACE CONSPICUOUSLY EXEMPLIFIED IN COLONEL BAYARD—EXTENSIVE REVIVALS IN NOVA SCOTIA AND AT ST. JOHN, N. B.—SIGNAL FAILURE OF ATTEMPTS TO PROPAGATE SANDIMANIAN DOCTRINES IN HALIFAX—DESIGNATION OF MESSRS. BLACK AND BENNETT AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BRITISH CONFERENCE TO THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON THE POSITION OF METHODISM IN THE CANADAS.

With the year 1794 closes Mr. Black's Journal. It has been my endeavour to cull from it whatever materials appeared to me most appropriate to the design of biography. With those I have connected some collateral topics, naturally suggested by the narrative, and such illustrations of character as my personal knowledge of the individuals to whom reference is made, has enabled me to supply. In the sequel of the work the same unbroken continuity of events is not to be expected. Our materials, however, are not exhausted. Much of interest yet remains; but the extension of the volume beyond its contemplated limits

admonishes us to be studious of selection and brevity. Any chasms which may occur will excite the less astonishment, when it is remembered that Mr. Black's labours, as well as the cause which had so abundantly prospered under his auspices, had now acquired a character of uniformity, and were therefore only occasionally marked with incident of a very striking order.

Strong and ever-increasing as were his ties and attachments to Nova Scotia, his 'own, his native land,' still possessed a charm and an attraction that operated powerfully upon his mind: and it was not until the voice of Divine Providence unequivocally interdicted such a course, that he abandoned the cherished expectation and hope of spending the evening of his life in England. The grand objection to the accomplishment of his wishes in this particular arose from the paternal relation he sustained to the work of God in Nova Scotia, and from the consequences to be apprehended from the disruption of his union with it. That objection he endeavoured at one period to obviate, by proposing that the societies in Nova Scotia and the sister provinces should be transferred to the American Connexion. Their proximity to the United States, he was then of opinion, would greatly contribute to the extension and stability of the work, by securing a more regular supply of ministerial agency and the efficient superintendence of the bishops. Political obstacles, however, presented themselves to the salutary working of such a plan. These Mr. Black foresaw, but he flattered himself that they would not prove insuperable.—“It is now a subject of consideration amongst us,” he writes Bishop Asbury, “whether we ought not to put ourselves under the 'direction of the

American bishops. I have mentioned it to some of the preachers. It is objected that such an union would excite the jealousies of our Civil Governors : but in my opinion, if the preachers who might come from the United States should be prudent men, and let politics alone, there would be nothing to fear from that quarter. -What have the ministers of Christ to do with the administration of civil government? Christ's kingdom is not of this world. We are neither magistrates nor legislators." Were all ministers influenced by the same elevated views of the spirituality of their office, and endued with the same degree of prudence that Mr. Black possessed, the arrangement which in the charity and sincerity of his heart he recommended, might possibly have been adopted without any disastrous consequences. Such *were* the views entertained, and such the course pursued by Christians and Christian ministers in relation to human governments in the days of the Church's glory. And thus it was that they operated with the most beneficent influence on the very elements of the social system, and changed the frame and the face of the evangelized nations. "The governments which have most influence in the world, glory in the name of *Christian* ; and profess to derive their fundamental principles, both of *law* and *equity* from the Book of God. Had the genuine followers of Christ taken part in the different political discussions, by which the nations where they sojourned have been embroiled and agitated, these glorious ends, humanly speaking, had never been accomplished. The Christian Church would have been a wretched grovelling thing, cooped up in corners, without shedding a ray of beneficence on the earth ; as equally unproductive of *glory to God*

in the Highest, as of peace and good will among men. We are authorized to speak thus, from the fall of those churches or individuals which, in different parts, identified themselves with the *disaffected*, complained of state corruptions, discussed politics and not religion, and were soon shorn of their strength, and became like *other men*.²⁸ Apart from the merits of the plan meditated by Mr. Black for the ecclesiastical government of the societies in Nova Scotia, &c., his dissociation from them was deprecated by all who had at heart their best interests. In a letter dated *Wakefield, May 5, 1801*, Doctor Coke thus remonstrates with him on the subject:—"What will you do in a circuit in England? They don't want you. Give up your great sphere of action, in which God has by a series of miracles placed you, if you dare; mind you will repent of it but once, if you retain the life of God." An opportunity, however, was afforded him, of visiting England: and there is reason to believe that the hallowed impression which his piety produced on the hearts of many who were there intimately conversant with him, will be had in everlasting remembrance. Should Dr. Bunting cast his eye over this page, he will not, we are persuaded, be displeased at seeing his name associated with that of one whom he so much loved and venerated, nor feel inclined to blame us for giving publicity to 'his heart's just estimation' of the holy and amiable subject of this Memoir. In a letter dated, *Macclesfield Circuit, Feb. 23, 1802*, the Dr. thus addresses him:—

"MY DEAR MR. BLACK,

"I know not whether you will, at first sight, recog-

²⁸ Dr. A. Clarke's 'Discourse on the rights of God and Cæsar.'

nize the name of Jabez Bunting ; but having an opportunity of transmitting a packet by ship to Nova Scotia, I cannot help writing a few lines to you, and a few more to my old friend Mr. Bennett, with the delivery of which I must beg leave to trouble you. I often recollect with pleasure the agreeable and profitable moments we spent together at Oldham and Manchester, during your last visit to England, and am thankful to God that ever I knew you on earth, because I am persuaded that through his abundant mercy in Christ Jesus, I shall hereafter know you in heaven, and there be permitted to resume and perfect that intercourse and acquaintance, which here were so transient, and so speedily suspended by separation. In the General Assembly, and Church of the First-born, I hope to meet my honoured friend again, and to mingle with his, and with those of ten thousand times ten thousand others, my everlasting Hosannas to the Lamb that was slain. Even so, Lord Jesus !

“ I was pleased and thankful sometime ago in a Love-feast at Saddleworth, to hear the testimony of one, who was awakened under a sermon you preached at Delph, from, ‘ Behold I stand at the door,’ &c., on the Sunday you spent there with me in April, 1800. I mention this to shew you, that you have some seals of your ministry in these parts of the world, and that your labours of love among us were not in vain in the Lord.”

An extract from another letter which he received from the same distinguished minister of Christ, a few months after, will not be unacceptable to the reader :—

“ I thank you most warmly for the intelligence you

have communicated concerning the appointments of your last Conference, and other Nova Scotian affairs. As a Christian and a Methodist, however undeserving of those honourable appellations, I feel myself cordially interested in every thing which concerns Christianity and Methodism in any part of the world. I trust that the infant churches, which our Lord has made you the chief instrument of planting in the corner of the vineyard where you now reside, will more abundantly flourish and increase; and, watered by his heavenly blessing and influence, will produce, in glorious plenty, all the fruits of righteousness.

“Your account of Mr. Bennett is very pleasing to me. I greatly love him in the truth; and most ardently wish for his increasing comfort and usefulness. He has never yet written to me. Pray offer my most brotherly and affectionate respects to him, and to Mr. Marsden, when you write to or see them.”

In the autumn of 1804, Mr. Black transmitted to the Missionary Committee in London a more detailed account of the state and prospects of the societies under his superintendence than he had previously furnished, which, in addition to some interesting information respecting the statistics of the province at that period, carries forward his personal history, and will convey an idea of the care and exertion demanded by the responsibilities of his office:—

“DEAR AND RESPECTED BRETHREN,

“It is proper you should receive all the information we can give you, both as to our temporal and spiritual state. It would be a singular pleasure to me, could I present you with a statement of our affairs, more

adapted to administer comfort to you, and to every lover of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the souls he has redeemed by his most precious blood.

“ I believe no census of the people has been taken in this, or the neighbouring province of New Brunswick. The number of inhabitants in Nova Scotia, I think, cannot be estimated at less than sixty thousand, of whom one fourth are of the Romish communion, and violently attached to the religion of their forefathers. Some of this profession have occasionally come under our ministry : and perhaps half a dozen have been converted, and added to the Methodist society.

“ New Brunswick does not contain more than half the number of inhabitants there are in Nova Scotia : perhaps not more than twenty, or at the farthest twenty-five thousand. The local situation of these provinces is much against us. There are few towns. The inhabitants are thinly scattered ; and the two provinces are separated from each other by the Bay of Fundy. In many places the roads are extremely bad, and the country intersected by bays and rivers, or divided by impregnable forests. The inhabitants are chiefly settled along the shores of the Atlantic, the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the Bay of Fundy ; or, in the interior, along the sides of rivers and lakes. The preachers are obliged to be alone in their different circuits, and far separated from each other. However *young* a preacher may be, the sole management is necessarily in his own hands, at least for the time being.

“ At Halifax we have a good society of about one hundred and fifty members, most of whom profess an experimental knowledge of the power and comforts of religion. Last winter twelve persons were brought

into Christian liberty. The congregations are serious and attentive to the word. On the Sabbath the chapel is pretty well filled, and often crowded. It is supposed to contain nine hundred persons. Halifax is a very unsettled place. When there is a large military and naval force on the station, as was the case in the two former wars, and the public works call for many artificers, money becomes plentiful, trade brisk, and many flock in from other parts to partake of the benefit. But when the ships and troops are removed, money is scarce, trade dull, and labour not to be had. These mutations have considerably affected the society here, and have sometimes been exceedingly felt. By emigrations from Halifax, since my first coming to this town, we have lost about three hundred of our members, many of whom were valuable men, possessed not only of much solid, and well-*tried* faith and piety, but of various and useful talents. The Methodists are much esteemed by those in authority, for their quiet and orderly lives, good morals and strict loyalty.*

" At Liverpool, a small town on the sea coast, about twenty leagues to the westward of Halifax, we have a neat little chapel, which will contain about five or six hundred persons. At Liverpool and the adjacent settlements, there are, perhaps, two thousand souls, among whom there have been considerable revivals at various times, as well in the Independent or Congregational church, as in our own. We have in our

* In proof of this, Mr. B. appeals to several instances of kindness, shewn to the Methodists, by those in authority; particularly by the late Governor Parr, and the present Governor, Sir John Wentworth; and also to the good opinion which His Royal Highness, Prince Edward, was known to entertain of them, when he commanded on that station.

Society here about one hundred and twenty communicants ; and three principal magistrates are amongst the number, all of them pious and worthy men.

“ At Shelburne, a town about ten leagues to the west of Liverpool, we are building a chapel. There are in society about a hundred members. The population of this place has exceedingly decreased ; so that it does not contain one tenth of the inhabitants who settled in it at the conclusion of the American war. Not less than two hundred or two hundred and fifty of our members have removed thence to other parts of the world. Are they, then, lost, and have we spent our labour in vain ? Nay, God forbid. We hope to meet many of them again in heaven, to celebrate the praises of redeeming love for ever and ever, Amen !

“ At Annapolis Royal, a small town on the south side of the river which bears its name, about one hundred and thirty miles distant from Halifax, we have a neat little chapel, supposed to contain about four hundred persons ; and at Granville, on the opposite side of the river, some miles above, we have another. At different times the Lord has graciously poured out his Spirit on these congregations. There are upwards of a hundred members in society, nearly all of whom profess an experimental knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. Their number would probably have doubled, had it been in our power to have supplied them with regular preaching, and thereby to have prevented our people being drawn away by Antinomian teachers. It will not perhaps be displeasing to you if I here mention a remarkable instance of the mighty power and grace of the Redeemer. Colonel Bayard, who, during the last war, commanded one of His Majesty's regiments, then lying at Halifax, and is

NOW resident on his country seat about thirty miles above Annapolis, has lately experienced a gracious change; and though formerly so averse to the Methodists that he would not suffer one of his family to hear them preach, has now opened his own house for preaching. Having heard, when on my way to Annapolis last winter, that the Colonel had some religious concern on his mind, I determined to visit him, not then knowing, what I afterwards learned, that he had sent a note to me on the road, requesting that I would call at his house. He received me with the utmost kindness, and rejoiced to have a Methodist preacher under his roof. With many tears he lamented his former infidelity and aversion to the people of God; and expressed, again and again, his thankfulness to the divine goodness, that his eyes were opened ere it was too late. His servant was soon sent to invite Captain R—, Lawyer A—, and some others to dinner and tea; and all the neighbourhood for some miles round, to hear preaching in the evening. We had a solemn and profitable season, while I discoursed on the nature of Christian faith, and the preciousness of Jesus to those who believe in him, from 1 Pet. xi : 7. Several Christian friends stopped after the public service; and the evening was agreeably spent in singing, prayer, and Christian conversation. The means of the Colonel's being awakened to a sense of his real condition, was the reading Mr. Wesley's Sermons, put into his hands, if I remember right, by Lawyer A—. On my return from Annapolis I had the pleasure of spending another night at the Colonel's, and of giving them another sermon. Mrs. B. also evinces true penitence; and will, I trust, soon be numbered with the children of God, and enabled to rejoice in

Christ Jesus. The Colonel is much attached to the writings of Wesley and Fletcher. He has given me an order to procure him Mr. Wesley's Sermons, and Mr. Fletcher's Works, together with Dr. Coke's Commentary. I have not seen the good man since my return from the United States ; but I understand he is still pressing on in the good way, and continues at once to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and to weep over his past sinful life. He is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor of his ministers, nor yet of his people. Blessed be God, there are at least some among the rich and honourable, that share the reproaches of the cross, 'and count all things but dung, that they may win Christ, and be found in him, not having their own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of Jesus Christ.'

"In the Windsor Circuit we have a few pious friends. The number in society does not, I believe, exceed sixty. At Newport, which is included in the circuit, we had formerly about eighty members, most of whom were the fruits of Mr. John Mann's ministry ; but at present we can hardly say that we have any society there. Most of them have returned to the world again, or gone over to the Antinomians. I doubt if ten remain who meet in class. Horton is the principal place in the circuit, where we have a convenient chapel, which is generally well attended. For several years, the Rev. Mr. Twining, a Missionary of the Established Church, resident at Cornwallis, has once in three weeks preached in our chapel at Horton, and frequently administered the Lord's Supper to our people. About five or six years ago, he was first brought to experience the converting grace of God ; from which time he has not shunned to declare the

necessity of regeneration, and warmly to press on the consciences of his hearers, this and the other distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. He has been frequently present at the meeting of the class, and spoken with great humility and thankfulness of the grace of Christ Jesus ; and has sometimes met the society himself. His attachment to the Methodists, and his plain manner of preaching the doctrines of the Gospel, have brought upon him much reproach, and considerable trials from some, from whom he ought to have received much encouragement. Benjamin Belcher, Esq. one of his vestry, who had been his principal opponent, and had preferred many charges against him to the Bishop, on his death-bed sent for Mr. Twining to pray with him, and in his will left about £200 towards the building him a church.

“ On the Cumberland Circuit, at the head of the Bay of Fundy, we have three chapels, and about ninety members in society. Of the state of this people, I never think but with grief and pain. Here it was, about twenty-four years ago, I commenced my ministerial labours, and saw a gracious work of God extending itself through the infant settlements, from Napan to the head of the river Pedriodive. There were about two hundred persons who met together in class, most of whom professed to be, and many of whom I doubt not were, the humble followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. But, alas ! the enemy of God and man came and sowed tares—the tares of Antinomian doctrines amongst us. He divided that he might the more successfully destroy. The spirit of holy love, and godly fear, has been gradually declining almost ever since.

“ Ramsheg, (now called Wallace) however, where

the *do nothing scheme*, or Antinomian delusion, has never yet been able to force its way, is a pleasing exception. There the most abandoned has, for a number of years, become the most orderly and pious part of the country. Civil and religious discords have rendered almost vain all the labour bestowed on the other parts of the circuit.

“ On the River St. John, in the Province of New Brunswick, there are three or four chapels, and about two hundred members.

“ At the City St. John, our chapel will probably contain four hundred persons, and is generally well attended. There are about eighty in society. Our members here, also, have been much reduced by emigration, occasioned chiefly by the late and present war having so seriously affected their trade. Had we been able to supply the settlements on the River St. John with suitable preachers for the last twelve years, almost the entire country, for two hundred miles together, would have embraced the Methodist doctrines. That time is now lost ; they are deeply initiated into the mysteries of Antinomianism, which in some instances has produced extravagancies hardly to be surpassed in the whole history of enthusiasm.

“ At St. Stephen’s, on the River Schoodic, a branch of the St. Croix, which divides the United States from the British territory, and St. David’s, another branch of the same river, we have two chapels and a number of worthy, pious friends. The society consists of about seventy members, chiefly the fruits of Mr. McColl’s ministry.

“ Such are the general outlines of the work in this country. Any hints from you will be received by us

with joy, and attentively regarded. We are in daily expectation of two or more preachers from England. The prospect of doing good is not so extensive in this country as in the West Indies, and in some other places; and missionaries here have doubtless many difficulties to encounter; but there are many precious souls for whom Christ died, who are 'perishing for lack of knowledge'; many who are calling upon us from various quarters, 'Come over and help us.' May the Lord of the harvest raise up and send forth more labourers into his vineyard!

"Manchester, a large settlement on the west side of the Gut of Canso, and several adjacent settlements, would, I believe, be open to receive a preacher, could we send them one. I propose visiting them next summer, if possible, if I can do so without neglecting other places already under our care. We have long been solicited to send a preacher to Prince Edward Island. The Governor of that Island, when I visited Charlottetown, some years ago, expressed a strong wish that we should establish a mission there.

"I feel my heart engaged in the arduous and honourable work to which the Lord in his condescending goodness hath called me, and in the exercise of which he has so often blest my own soul, and given me to see his blessing on my poor labours wherever his good providence has permitted me to preach. I lament my snail-like progress in the heavenly road, and desire with more hasty steps to seek the goal. I want to be more sensible of my Redeemer's love to me, and of a greater conformity of my soul to him in all things. He is my hope, my portion, my joy. My dear companion, who has lately been uncommonly

blessed in her soul, joins me in best regards to you. We entreat an interest in all your prayers.

“ I am, &c.”

For the Almighty Spirit to descend on a man, to *apprehend* him, as the great Apostle expresses it, amidst the thoughtless crowd, by a potency that *transforms* when it *touches* him, and to conduct him forward to another life, under an influence which purifies him as he advances, in spite of all the powers of corruption, has been justly represented as involving a more extraordinary train, could the divine management be fully disclosed, than the mere political history of an *empire*. A signal exemplification of this profound remark, such we believe as has few parallels in the entire range of religious biography, was afforded in the conversion of Colonel Bayard, in connection with the pre-eminent sanctity of his subsequent life to the hour of his triumphant departure. So sudden was the change, that within a few days of the time he became an illustrious monument of the transforming energy of the Gospel, such an event seemed quite as improbable as would have appeared the conversion of Paul, on the morning of the day when he set forth to go to Damascus with a commission from the high-priest, feasting on the prospect of making havoc of the church; and yet so complete was it, that without any exaggeration, he became *a new creature*; *old things passed away*; *behold all things became new*. As if entirely sanctified from the moment of his birth from above, he exhibited at once, and continually, the lineaments of the divine image, in all the perfection of their beauty, and all the fruits of the Spirit in the *mellowness* of full maturity. The conversion of an officer

so distinguished by rank, by bravery, by profaneness, by dissipation, in a word by an utter and arrogant recklessness of all religious concerns, could not but excite a profound sensation throughout the wide and respectable circle of his acquaintance. Far and near it was matter of astonishment, and the topic of remark. To some it was quite obvious that he was beside himself : others, more cool and philosophic, predicted that the fever of religious enthusiasm would soon pass away, and his former fashionable vices resume their wonted ascendancy. Where are now their theories and their predictions ? Where the cloak for their scepticism ? Was not a period of nearly thirty years a probation sufficient to test and demonstrate that *the excellency of the power*—in virtue of which he became, from an imperious and licentious adversary of the Gospel, a meek and lowly follower of the Lamb—was of God, and not of man ? His fortune was the only limit of his charity and hospitality ; he was clothed with humility ; the unction that descended upon him from the Holy One, “ went down to the skirts of his garments,” and filled the place where he was with its celestial odour ; his breath was prayer and praise. I am delineating no *ideal* picture. I speak that I do know, and testify that I have seen. Often has it been my priceless privilege to witness such a manifestation of the grace of God in him, as no language I can command is adequate to describe, and such as no one, I verily believe, can adequately conceive who has not seen a Fletcher, or a Bayard.* When officiating at his domestic altar, he usually read the Word of God

* Colonel Bayard was often designated among his religious acquaintance, the Fletcher of Nova Scotia.

standing ; and I never saw him do so without bedewing it with his tears. Before he had proceeded many verses in the lesson, his venerable and majestic form would tremble, as if beneath the superincumbent weight of the Spirit of Glory and of God that rested upon him ; tears would suffuse his face ; and some pious ejaculation, or burst of praise, intermingled with the heavenly oracles, would touch a responsive chord in every heart possessed of a particle of spiritual susceptibility. Eternity has now placed its signet upon his character. Sweetly he sleeps in Jesus. I here record my deep-felt gratitude to God that I ever knew him.

—————“ Take him for all in all,
I ne'er shall look upon his like again.”

Mr. Black appears to have attended the American Conference of 1804, and to have been personally requested by Dr. Coke, while there, to take a station for a time in Bermuda. The matter, it would seem, was fixed : and in order to conciliate the minds of the society at Halifax, to Mr. Black's temporary removal from them, the Dr. addressed to them the following letter :—

“ PHILADELPHIA, MAY 28, 1804.

“ VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

“ I have earnestly requested my highly esteemed friend, the Rev. William Black, to visit Bermuda, and if a door be opened there for the Gospel, to remove his family thither, and spend three or four years in the Island : and he has at last consented, though his love and sympathy for and with you, were very powerful hindrances to his compliance.

“ I shall use my utmost endeavours at the next Eu-

ropean Conferences, to procure two Missionaries for Nova Scotia, and have little doubt but I shall succeed. As soon as they arrive, Mr. Black can station them, before he sets off for Bermuda. I feel very much for you, my dear Brethren; but Mr. Black has been your apostle for above twenty years; and it is now high time that he should be an apostle elsewhere. I have no doubt but he will have a society of six hundred, or perhaps one thousand members in Bermuda, in four years. He may then, if he please, return to superintend the work in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; but it will depend upon his own choice whether he return to you, or to England, or remain at Bermuda.

“You have reason to be *sorry*, Brethren, but you have no reason to *complain*. You must not trust in an arm of flesh, however useful Christ may have made it to you. On Christ alone you must depend; and I have no doubt but he will make the trying circumstance a blessing, not only to Bermuda, but even to you. Unto the guardian care and holy keeping of him, your gracious God, I commend you. May he pour out his Spirit more abundantly than ever upon you. I request you to believe me to be, what I most sincerely am,

“Your truly affectionate Brother,

“And faithful Friend,

“T. COKE.”

The intention of the Committee, however, with respect to the final removal of Mr. Black and his family to Bermuda, was entirely frustrated by circumstances over which he had no controul. He proceeded to Boston, and afterwards to New York, to obtain

a passage ; and although he at last succeeded in engaging one, other persons, who were from Bermuda, and intended to go by the same vessel, threw such impediments in the way, as eventually prevented his proceeding on the voyage. It appears they were associated with the persecutors of Mr. Stevenson, who had been imprisoned in the Island for preaching ; and they positively refused to allow Mr. Black to proceed with them. No other opportunity offering, after consulting with the Brethren in New York, he returned to Halifax, by way of New Brunswick, on the 23d of August, 1804.

It is in proof of the peculiarly high estimation in which Mr. Black stood with the Missionary Committee and Dr. Coke, that though thus repeatedly disappointed in their wishes by uncontrollable circumstances, still they did not abandon the design and hope, that it might yet be in his power, for a few years at least, to afford the work in the West Indies the benefit of his prudent and faithful labours and counsels. In a letter from the Rev. Joseph Entwisle, the Missionary Secretary, dated Feb. 4, 1806, he was informed :—“ The Committee have long been convinced that it would be an improvement in our plan, to have a person employed in the West Indies as a General Superintendent, under the direction of Dr. Coke and the Committee, of our work there. *You* have frequently been spoken of as the most proper person, were it agreeable to yourself. When this was mentioned to Dr. Coke, he highly approved of it, and we all agreed that it should be laid before you, and the question asked, whether you would find your mind free to it ? If you answer in the affirmative, the business will be laid before the next Conference. May

the Lord direct us in this, and all other measures relating to his Church, and conducive to the increase of religion in the world."

This official communication was followed by a friendly letter, more than usually urgent, from Dr. Coke, dated, Cork, May 29, 1806.

"VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"We are very desirous that you would go to Bermuda, drawing on us for all your expenses and those of your family to go thither ; and all you may want while there. Perhaps you are there now, as I have written to you before on the subject. We know of no one who will do so well for that Island as yourself : and hundreds of the poor people there, who long for the Gospel, seem to be perishing for lack of knowledge. All persecution is removed. One of the greatest persecutors is converted to God. God himself has opened the door, and opened it, I verily believe, for you. Go in the name of the Lord. If you come home now, you would be useful : you would be useful any where. But you will, I have no doubt, be abundantly more useful in Bermuda. All will be clear gain for God. Whereas there is nothing extraordinary that requires your presence in England : but there is in Bermuda. God bless you. My dearest wife joins me in love to you, and sister Black, and all the family : My love to all the Preachers.

"I am, your faithful Friend,

"T. COKE."

Mr. Black, in reply, expressed his willingness to go to Bermuda, in case two or three Missionaries should in the meantime be sent to Nova Scotia ; but declined

assuming the general charge of the West India Missions, on the following grounds :—“ 1. A tropical climate would ill agree with the state of my health, being already advanced in years, and considerably affected by former labours and fatigues. 2. A still greater objection arises from my want of mental and moral qualifications for so great and important a work. Whoever superintends so many preachers, and such large societies, scattered over so many islands, so distant from each other, will require not a little both of wisdom and grace.”

Although Mr. Black consented, conditionally, to go to Bermuda, his Brethren, the preachers, when assembled this year in their District Meeting, at Horton, unanimously petitioned the British Conference that Mr. Black might still remain with them, and that the sphere of his superintendency might be extended to Newfoundland, &c.

The reader will have remarked, that the circumstantial and interesting account of the work of God in Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, which Mr. Black transmitted to the Missionary Committee, in the autumn of 1804, is introduced with an expression of deep regret, that spiritual feeling was, at that period, at so low an ebb in the Provinces. Not long after, however, the tide of spiritual prosperity turned, and flowed back with so copious a stream, as to inundate its banks, and diffuse fertility and joy on every hand. The reviving influence was felt from Barrington and Liverpool (N. S.) to the City of St. John (N. B.) In the latter place, in the summer of 1807, seventy persons joined the Society in three weeks, under the ministry of Mr. Joshua Marsden. A concern for salvation pervaded all classes, especially the young, and

the whole city seemed moved. "At Barrington," writes Mr. Black in the same year, "and various little harbours from thence to Liverpool, the Lord has been graciously pouring out his Spirit. I had many precious seasons with them. Some found peace with God; and about fourteen new members were added to the Barrington Society." The zealous labours of the Rev. William Bennett, whose name will be transmitted to posterity as one of the most faithful Missionaries that ever laboured in the Provinces, were simultaneously attended with blessed success on the Annapolis Circuit. In a letter to the Committee, dated Annapolis Royal, June 23, 1807, he writes as follows:—"Hitherto I have been favoured with health and strength of body, sufficient to go on in my ministerial labours, and blessed be God, I have not been comfortless. Many a time has the Lord visited my soul, and made it like a watered garden. Never did I experience so much of the overwhelming power of saving grace as a few weeks ago, in a part of my circuit, where the Lord has begun a good work, several having been brought to God, and our old professors much quickened. Within twelve months past the Lord has poured out his Spirit abundantly in many parts of this Province, and that among other denominations of Christians, as well as among us. In this we rejoice, that the Kingdom of God is enlarging. Joshua Newton, Esq., writes to me from Liverpool,—'I am happy to have so agreeable an occasion to renew to you my assurances of regard. The Lord has done, and is still doing great things for Liverpool. His Spirit is poured out, in a manner I did not expect to see, upon old men and maidens, young men and children. There appears to be a

general awakening among the inhabitants of this town and its vicinity, very few excepted. Some of the most profligate have been brought to a knowledge of God, —to a *change of heart and life*, so that we stand astonished to see what the Lord has wrought. Most of our old professors have awakened as from a dream. Our dear brother Sutcliffe (the Missionary) has had his cup running over, scarcely being able to credit his own eyes or ears : our most sanguine expectations are exceeded ; and though we have prayed for this blessing we stand amazed at the work. What is still more singular, there are no opposers : some of the Painites have been convinced and converted, and have burnt their books ; and the few infidels that remain among us are ashamed, and keep out of sight. A spirit of harmony also prevails among Christians of various denominations, and we seem to *live* alike, though we do not quite *think* alike. This is a day I never expected to see in Liverpool. Oh ! that the great Master of Assemblies may give grace and wisdom to all who have to take an active part in the work, that they may deal prudently, and by sound doctrine and good discipline, preserve the tender lambs from the devouring lion and crooked serpent, that the work may spread wide and sink deep. I have reason to bless the Lord, that my soul has partook of this gracious work ; and I feel truly desirous to know more of Jesus and the power of his resurrection—to be more wise, holy, and useful. Colonel Perkins and his family have set out in good earnest for the kingdom, and our dear sisters, Lucy and Betsy, have found that blessing which they have long sought with tears. Glory be to God for all his mercies ! My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that this work may spread

through the Province, among high and low, rich and poor, as it hath done with us ; and that He may go on till the whole world bows to his sway ' ” It is no uncommon thing that the stretching forth of the unshrouded arm of Jehovah, should excite the enemies of vital godliness to a more malignant and determined opposition to the truth. While a great door, and effectual, was thus opened, there were also, if not at Liverpool, elsewhere, some adversaries. Mr. Black, in a letter to the Missionary Committee, May 16, 1807, observes,—“ A very serious attack has been made on the Methodists since last autumn, and still continues, by the preaching of two gentlemen from Scotland, and by their assiduity in spreading Mr. Walker's Address to the Methodists, and Letters to A. Knox, Esq. Their connections in Scotland, are doing the same thing through some other parts of America, as in Canada, &c. They have not succeeded, however, in drawing away any of our members in this country, unless one, *who went out from us, because he was not of us*, his heart having departed, not only from us, but from the Lord, for some months before he left us ! ” Such opposition, so far from operating as a source of paralyzing discouragement to the faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, ought to be regarded by him as an auspicious omen, an indication of the genuineness of the work that awakens and exasperates it ; and it is sure in the issue to render more signal the triumph of the everlasting Gospel. We are not surprised, therefore, to find Mr. Black, in a letter of the 10th of October, in the same year, celebrating the obsequies of the heresy above alluded to : —“ Mr. Walker's friends in this place, that is, the Missionaries I mentioned in a former letter, as having

attracted considerable notice, have fallen into obscurity. Mr. Balfour, indeed, has left the place, and is gone to the United States. And I am mistaken if the other do not soon seek another field for his labours. His large congregation has dwindled to almost nothing." Mr. Balfour, the leading apostle of this *anti*-evangelical mission, on his arrival in New York, addressed himself to the worthy task of *caricaturing* the work of God in Nova Scotia, which he had endeavoured in vain to *destroy*. A letter, written from thence, to the Editor of the *Evangelical Magazine*, (is not this a misnomer ?) was the vehicle of his impotent malice. To give a specimen of this very charitable and veracious gentleman's testimony,—“ I conversed,” says he, “ pretty closely, with several of the persons who said they were converted. They talked much of the Spirit—of the power of God—of conversion—and of coming out, as they call it. They concluded themselves converted, if they had been affected, fell down, cried out, &c. They talked with a degree of unpleasant confidence about themselves. They seemed displeased if you hinted to them the possibility of being deceived. What to think or say of it is difficult ; nor would I pronounce upon the whole from a part.” The difficulty which Mr. Balfour felt in this matter, disappeared in a moment before the superior spiritual discrimination of the Conductors of the *Christian Observer*. They had “ no hesitation in pronouncing those to be in an awful delusion, who conclude themselves converted because they had been affected, fell down, and cried out.” Most certainly not—and how astonishing that Mr. Balfour should have felt the slightest embarrassment in a case so palpable ! But the maguanimous decision of these gentlemen

must have instantly relieved him from all perplexity, and abundantly confirmed his *faith*. "*Conclude themselves converted because they had been affected, fell down, or cried out !*" This witness is not true. The letters of the Missionaries, and that of Joshua Newton, Esq., neither authorize such an allegation, nor admit of it. Their language is perfectly scriptural, and they contain most satisfactory internal evidence of the transforming and *practical effects* of the glorious manifestations of divine grace which they record. On this topic there appeared, at the time, some able strictures in the Methodist Magazine, strongly denunciative of the course pursued by the periodicals above referred to, in endorsing Mr. Balfour's ill-disguised attacks upon all *experimental* religion. The reader will not be displeased to see the just and forcible remarks with which they wind up, transferred to this page.

"And now we appeal to our readers, whether there be not sufficient evidence from these letters, manifestly written in simplicity and the fear of God, and without any view whatever to their being made public, that our Missionaries in Nova Scotia judge of the conversion of sinners by very different marks from those specified by Mr. Balfour, even if we should take in his *et cetera*, which the fertile imaginations of the Christian Observers have taught them to "presume must refer to the *hearing voices, seeing visions* during their *trances*, or to some anomalous *extravagancies*." For where are any such things mentioned, or so much as hinted at in their letters, as being signs of conversion? We know that however pleasing it may be to our Missionaries to see people *affected* under the word, and to find thereby that it is not spoken in vain,

but makes some impression on their hearers, they are better instructed in divine things than to substitute any animal emotions or passions, or any mere opinions, true or false, Arminian or Calvinistic, in the place of repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, or the graces and virtues of the Christian life. We appeal to our readers also, whether it was a Christian conduct for Mr. Balfour and his associate, on their first entering the province of Nova Scotia, into which it appears they were sent as Christian Missionaries, by a society in Scotland, to begin their Missionary labours by endeavouring to overthrow those of others, whose labours God had *long owned*, and was owning *at that very time* in a *peculiar manner*, in turning scores, nay hundreds, from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God? We refer to their industriously circulating the false, bitter, and libellous pamphlets, written by an avowed Sandimanian against a body of people, whom, we are bold to say, God has raised up and used in effecting such a reformation in Great Britain, Ireland, and America, as had not been known for many generations, and whose missions, began and carried on in simplicity, and without ostentation, have been blessed of God, and rendered successful, we believe, above those of any other description of Christians:—Pamphlets, which could have no possible tendency but to sow the seeds of discord or division among such as had been lately brought to God, alienate their affections from their spiritual fathers, stop the further progress of the work, and confirm and harden infidels, and open sinners, in their unbelief and sin. Blessed be God, however, these unchristian proceedings of Mr. B. and his helper, have signally failed in producing the wished

for effect. They are *cast down and fallen*, while those that purely intended the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, are *risen and stand upright.*"

In 1812, Mr. Black was compelled by his accumulating infirmities to become a Supernumerary: "but from that time to the period of his decease," in the words of Mr. Knight, "he continued to render many and important services to the church; and in her most endearing recollection is his name enshrined."

In 1816, he was designated in connection with the Rev. William Bennett, by the British Conference, on an embassy of equal delicacy and importance, to the American General Conference. It related to the peculiar position of Methodism in Upper and Lower Canada. The first societies raised in these Provinces were the fruits of the labours of Ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. The spiritual relationship thus originated, was, from the mutual attachment between the preachers and people, thence resulting, and the proximity of the two countries, perpetuated till within a year or two of the time when Messrs. Black and Bennett were directed to proceed to the General Conference, at Baltimore, and to submit to the American Brethren, such a plan for the future management of those societies as the British Conference were deliberately of opinion was alike necessary to their permanent peace and fair political reputation. The pastoral connection of American ministers with British subjects, was, it will be universally admitted, an incongruous one, and although originating in the purest of motives, and in the infancy of the provinces, under the auspices of prudent and excellent men, productive of little, if any, inconvenience, was obviously far from being unexception-

able as a permanent system. The jealousies of Government were in process of time excited ; and a painful collision of natural feeling fomented by war, began to manifest itself, especially at Montreal. So urgent and importunate were the official members of society there, in their applications to the British Conference, to be taken under 'their ecclesiastical direction and care, that a Missionary had been sent to them, under a full conviction, on the part of the Conference, that in refusing to respond to the call, they would have been guilty of abandoning those who had an indefeasible claim on their ministerial consideration. The letter addressed to the Missionary committee, by Mr. Black and his respected colleague, after their best efforts to accomplish the object of their negotiation, lucidly exhibits the facts of the whole case.

To the Methodist Missionary Committee, in London.

“ REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN,

“ On the receipt of your letter, desiring us to attend the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to commence at Baltimore, on the 1st of May, 1816, and to endeavour a settlement with our Brethren, of the matters in dispute at Montreal, and to submit to them your wishes that the Canadas should, in future, be under the direction of the British Conference, if that could be peaceably effected:—we hastened with all possible despatch to Baltimore, and arrived there the 5th of May, five days after the Conference opened.

“ Immediately on our arrival, we waited on Bishop McKindree, who received us in the most courteous

and friendly manner. We accompanied him to the place where the Preachers were assembled, and on motion of the Bishop, were voted to the honour of a seat in Conference. A Committee, consisting of the Rev. Messrs. Roberts, Draper and Harmon, were appointed to confer with us, and report the result. Our views were mutually communicated in the most friendly and Christian spirit.

“On our part, it was stated—that the Missionary Committee entertained the highest respect for their American brethren, and cherished towards them the most cordial and Christian love—that they considered both Connexions engaged in the same glorious work, and sincerely deprecated any contention,—and that they exceedingly lamented the division which had taken place at Montreal. To give them a full view of matters at Montreal, and of the reasons by which the Committee had been induced to send Missionaries thither, we read a copy of the letter sent from Montreal to the Missionary Committee, and gave a history of the whole transaction. We also read extracts from other letters bearing on the same subject, to which we added the expression of our own views.

“On their part, statements were made by Messieurs Birch and Ryan, (Preachers from Canada) materially different from those which were communicated to you, by our brethren in Montreal, and by Mr. Bennett: namely, that the application made by the brethren, at Montreal, was unofficial, done privately, and without the knowledge of the American Preacher; and that the manner in which the British Missionary obtained, and still held possession, of the Chapel and Parsonage, was both irregular and offensive. We appealed, in reply, to the opposing testimony contain-

ed in the letter from Montreal, that in 1811, *all* the official Members, Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders, applied to Dr. Coke for a British Preacher, and that he had directed us to send one from Nova Scotia, which the fewness of Preachers in that District would not admit of our doing. And then, as to the right of the Chapel and House, we asserted no claim; they remained with the Trustees, who unitedly put Mr. Williams in possession of them on his arrival in Montreal; and when Mr. Bennett visited them, they assured him of their having done so, and at that time the whole society was in peace.

“The Committee, in submitting their Report, recommended to the Conference the adoption of the following Resolutions:—

“1. That the General Conference shall, and it is hereby authorized, to supply the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada with Preachers.”

“2. That a respectful letter be addressed to the Missionary Committee in London, explaining the reasons on which the above Resolution is founded.”

“When the Report was read to the Conference, we rose and gave a full explanation of our views on the subject in discussion, in which were recapitulated the substance of what we had laid before the Committee. Among many other considerations, it was observed—

1. That the accession of the Canadas to the Nova Scotia District, by making room for frequent changes would be highly advantageous.
2. That the British Government was naturally jealous of persons coming from the United States into the Canadas, of which the late revision of the alien act was a sufficient proof.
3. That the connection of the Canadian Methodists with the United States, had already subjected them

to much suspicion and reproach. 4. That in case of war, it was probable the societies would be left without preachers, and suffer great loss. We may further remark, that in the course of our statements, it was observed, that wherever the people might wish to remain under the American Preachers, the British Missionaries would be enjoined to cultivate the best understanding with them, and in no case to foment division, or listen to men of a party spirit. We retired : a lengthy discussion ensued ; and it was determined by a majority ' that none of the societies in Canada should be given up to the British Conference.'

" On hearing the result, we determined to commit our thoughts to writing, and to send them in the shape of propositions to the Conference. When our propositions were read, many of the Preachers were desirous of re-considering the business, and of giving up the Canadas to the British Conference. This, however, was overruled. The Bishop, after informing us of the result of their deliberations, inquired whether we had any farther communications to make? We replied, that we had gone as far as we were authorized to go : that the Missionary Committee stated to us, that they could not, in conscience, withdraw the Missionaries who had been sent, under the constraining love of Christ, and at the pressing entreaties of the Society in Montreal, without their consent ; and that we must now leave the business with them and the British Conference. Thus ended our negotiation. Previously to leaving, we called on the Bishop, and requested him to assure the Conference of our esteem and Christian regards.

" We think it our duty to acquaint you with the kindness of our American brethren, who sent a depu-

tation to request our acceptance of \$100 towards our expenses.

“ We are, Rev. and Dear Brethren,

“ Your servants in the Gospel of Christ,

“ W. B. & W. B.”

In accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, appointed to confer with the Nova Scotia brethren, on this sensitive subject, a letter was addressed by the American, to the British Conference, exhibiting their reasons for declining to surrender the charge of the Canadian Societies. An authenticated copy of that document now lies before me ; but the reasons it assigns for the course adopted, have been anticipated in the preceding statements, and need not be here refuted. Principal stress is laid on the alleged fact, that it was the declared wish of a great majority of the Canadian Methodists, to continue under the ministry of the American Preachers : “ This wish, however,” the letter states, “ we are persuaded, does not arise from any opposition, or want of affection to their European brethren, but from the greater ease and certainty with which they think they can be supplied by us, in consequence of our contiguity to them, and from their peculiar attachment to us as their Fathers in the Gospel. And indeed, we do consider them as our spiritual children ; and if we seem to be unwilling to give up the charge of them, do not, dear brethren, think it strange ; the tie is strong. We trust you cannot, you will not, entertain an idea, that in our decision on this subject we have been in the least influenced by any consideration of temporal profit or ease : if we had, our decision would have been very different. Our object is the good and sal-

vation of souls, as yours also, we doubt not, is ; and we most sincerely hope and pray, that this affair may not have any tendency to diminish, in the least, that Christian affection and harmony which have hitherto, so long and so happily, subsisted between us."

Without tracing the intermediate gradation of causes which have contributed to place Methodism in the Canadas in the position it at present occupies, it may be sufficient to state, that the Lower Province now forms a District entirely under the direction and controul of the British Conference; and an "Union" has been formed between the Upper Canada Conference and the Parent Connection, according to the stipulations of which the President of the former is annually appointed by the British Conference, and the management of the Indian Missions is consigned to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee. This important arrangement was mainly effected by the offices of the Rev. Robert Alder, one of the Missionary Secretaries, with the noble-minded view of precluding all collision between the two Connections, and of securing the harmony and concentration of their efforts in promoting the cause of their common Lord. Under the provisions of the "Union," however, the Upper Canada Conference still remains virtually independent,—an anomaly in British Methodism. If we may be permitted, on this delicate subject, to venture an opinion, not formed without the most mature deliberation, it is that the brethren in Upper Canada would best consult their comfort and usefulness by seeking a *perfect coalition* with the Parent Connection. By such a consummation the preachers would gain much, and lose nothing, and the cause throughout the Pro-

vince be greatly elevated and promoted. This suggestion, in whatever light it may be regarded, emanates from the best affection of the writer towards the esteemed brethren with whom he has been, for several years, associated, and from a pure (he does not say prophetic) regard to the interests and honour of Upper Canada Methodism.

Vive, vale ! si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti ; si non, his utere mecum.—Hox
Farewell ! and if a better system's thine,
Impart it FRANKLY, or make use of mine.

CHAPTER XIV.

CATHOLICITY OF SPIRIT—MR. BLACK VISITS THE UNITED STATES—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE STATE OF METHODISM THERE IN 1784 AND 1820—LETTER OF MR. BLACK TO THE DISTRICT MEETING AT ST. JOHN, N. B.—LETTER FROM MR. WILKINS OF BALTIMORE—FAME AND CHARACTER OF SUMMERFIELD—MRS. BLACK'S DEATH AND CHARACTER—DEATH OF MR. SAMUEL BLACK AND MRS. J. A. BARRY—REV. MR. KNIGHT'S ACCOUNT OF MR. BLACK'S LAST MOMENTS—HIS SERMON ON THE OCCASION—REVIEW OF MR. BLACK'S CHARACTER.

WERE the *manifestation* of a truly catholic spirit as common among the various denominations of Christians as *professions* of mutual liberality and regard, the infidel would be ashamed of the objection against Divine Revelation, drawn from the diversity of sentiment that prevails among those whose hopes of immortality are identified with its truth. The Christian Church, instead of presenting the appearance of an arena of angry debate, as has been too frequently the case, would then be a mansion of amity and peace ; and if perfect harmony of opinion would not soon be the result of coalescence of affection, she would, at least, resemble a fine piece of Mosaic, in which the different materials, of various shades and colours, cemented on a common ground, are so art-

fully dispersed, as to blend insensibly into one another. But many, there is reason to believe, are eloquent in their declamations against bigotry, "whose love of good men" does not glow very intensely beyond the precincts of their own communion. A spirit of exclusiveness in religion, unlovely and repulsive at all times, is peculiarly inexcusable when it extends its operation to those who substantially agree with us in sentiment, purely because they are not of us. Of all denominations of Christians, there are none between whom there exist less real grounds for shyness and alienation than Churchmen and Methodists. If the declaration of an eminent member of the Establishment—"A Methodist is a Churchman *in earnest*"—be true, it is natural to suppose, that "a Churchman in earnest," using that expression in its best sense, must have rather an intimate alliance with Methodism, at least in spirit. To the gratifying exemplifications of this kind, in Nova Scotia, which we have already recorded, we are happy in having it in our power to add another in the Rev. Mr. Wright, whose faithful and impressive ministry, will be either "the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death" to those who sat under it. This deeply humble and devout man evinced towards Mr. Black the utmost respect and Christian regard, which the following letter attests were fully reciprocated :—

*To the Rev. Mr. Wright of Chester.**

HALIFAX, Aug. 7th, 1819.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

On my return from the country, I had the happi-

* The latter years of Mr. Wright's ministry were spent in Horton, where he was esteemed by all denominations, as a meek and

ness to receive yours of the 7th ult., together with the books. That they have been useful to you, is matter of thankfulness to us both. To Him, from whom all holy desires, all good thoughts, and all just works do proceed, be glory and honour. Amen.

“ I perceive with joy the *work of grace* in your heart, and am persuaded that God is *carrying it on* through all the discouragements, inward and outward, with which you have to struggle, and that he will certainly *finish* it, unless you should *wilfully abuse* the light and strength he has afforded you, and thereby counteract his gracious work. Go on, my dear Sir, and prosper. Bless God for what he has done. Hold fast the beginning of your confidence. Calmly wait and pray at the footstool of Divine Mercy for a day of Pentecost, a larger measure of every Christian grace, and power to fulfil your high calling as a Christian Minister.

“ I have read your letter with some attention, and was about to offer you some further thoughts, which I conceived might administer to your comfort and encouragement, by extracting a few passages from Mr. Fletcher's Letters, some of whose writings have already been so much blessed to you ; but I think it best to request your acceptance of the volume. You will not read it, I am persuaded, without attention and prayer, and I am equally confident the blessing of God will attend the perusal. It will be a valuable and instructive companion for some of your leisure hours, and a cordial to your fainting spirits in seasons of temptation.

lowly follower of the Lamb. He finished his course, I believe, at Bermuda, whither he went for the benefit of his declining health.

“ The memory of the just is blessed.”

“By this conveyance, I send you the volume of Cooper’s Sermons which you had the goodness to lend me. I have been pleased, not to say profited, by the perusal of them. They are plain, experimental, and practical. Desirous of possessing so valuable a work, I have procured the four volumes from England.

“It will be at all times gratifying to me to hear from you, and of your welfare. May your health be soon restored, and the ‘peace of God which passeth all understanding,’ be multiplied and abound exceedingly in your heart—may you be filled with that confidence which made enraptured Thomas exclaim, *Ο Κυριος μου και ο Θεος μου!*

“From the state of your health, perhaps it may not be improper to remind you, Dear Sir, that those involuntary depressions, which arise from physical causes, are rather to be considered as our *burdens* than as our *sins*; especially if we look up to God for grace and patience under them. In such cases, the spirit is often willing when the flesh is weak. The enemy, however, often takes advantage of them to discourage us in our Christian race. Pious persons, labouring under nervous disorders, often suffer much from not properly distinguishing between *natural* and *spiritual* maladies. Each class has its own remedy; and, through faith and prayer, both are rendered useful.

“I am, Rev. and Dear Sir,

“Your very affectionate,

“W. BLACK.”

Mr. Black was so much enfeebled during the winter of 1819—20, by the increase and aggravation of his infirmities, that he was induced, in the ensuing spring, to try the effect of a tour among his old friends in the

United States. Here, some of the most interesting recollections of his life were revived ; and while, with equal astonishment and gratitude, he contemplated what God had wrought by the instrumentality of Methodism, from *Maine* to the *Mississippi*, since the day when he first met the apostolic Coke at Baltimore, in 1784, the heart-exhilarating contrast contributed not a little to restore the tone of decaying nature. A letter addressed by him to the Wesleyan Missionary Committee on this occasion, dated Georgetown, near Washington, April 5th, 1820, is replete with interest. We present the reader with a copious extract :—“ My last communication, dated at Boston, would inform you of my safe arrival in the United States. My health is somewhat improved, but my constitution is yet very feeble : the effects of forty years labours in the ministry, together with the ordinary results of time, forbid any sanguine hope of its perfect restoration, or of much pulpit exercise. I am, however, desirous of doing what I can. Were it the will of my Heavenly Father, I should be glad to have my labours and usefulness extended together with my life, ‘ and cease at once to work and live.’ The idea of being laid aside, as a broken and useless vessel, which sometimes obtrudes itself upon me, is not a little painful. Yet, I desire, through grace, to live as clay in the hands of the potter. All he does is perfectly wise and good ; he cannot err. And he hath promised to be with his servants, even to hoary hairs. His will is best. Meantime, I will praise him that I can do a little.

“ The congregations at Boston, Providence, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Georgetown, and Alexandria, are large and attentive ; and

in the aggregate, cannot amount to less than thirty thousand. In most of those places are large and growing societies eminently alive to God. O what hath God wrought ! When I first met the late Dr. Coke at Baltimore (A. D. 1784) there were but 18,000 members in all the Methodist Societies in the American Connexion. There are now upwards of 250,000. The increase in the societies under the direction of the American Conferences, you know, the last year, was 11,297. It will be much larger this year. In all, there are eleven *Annual Conferences* ; but four of these have not yet had their session. It will be highly gratifying to you to learn that God has largely poured out his Spirit, and blessed the labours of his ministering servants, as appears from the effects : thousands of sinners are turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The *increase* of members under the superintendence of those Conferences, during the last year, is as follows :—

Ohio Conference, - - -	6,452	S. Carolina Conference,	324
Missouri do - - -	759	Virginia do	1,171
Tennessee do - - -	2,490	Baltimore do	2,700
Mississippi do - - -	250		

“Total gain this year, 14,152 members, to which add an increase of sixty-five preachers. Of the probable increase under the superintendence of the four remaining Conferences, I am not qualified to give an opinion. The Baltimore Conference commenced its session on the 8th ult. and rose on the 16th. My American brethren sent me a note, inviting me to a seat with them, at pleasure, during the sitting of the Conference. This I considered as a privilege, and thankfully accepted. During the session, much important business was done, and all with so much order and seriousness,

as is seldom exceeded in large deliberate bodies, even of Christian ministers. The examination of the characters, talents, doctrines, labours and usefulness of all the preachers, was solemn, interesting, pleasing and profitable in a high degree. The testimonies which were borne by the senior and junior brethren, each in their turn, to the piety, labours, and usefulness of each other, have left on my mind an indelible impression of the humility, brotherly love, and zeal to promote the Gospel of Christ, which unites and animates their body. Thus united, and thus animated, they will be blest.

"I am not much accustomed to preach to legislators, yet having had an invitation to fill the *place* of the Chaplain to Congress, next *Sabbath*, I have consented.* Bishop McKindree, who is with me at our mutual friend's, Henry Foxal, Esq., Mayor of Georgetown, offers to your acceptance, the expression of his highest regard, and of the love he bears to his *elder* brethren."

The days of Mr. Black's active engagements in the Christian ministry, except on a very limited scale, compared with his previous exertions, and his still undiminished desire "to serve his own generation by the will of God," were now fast drawing to a close. In 1823, the state of his health precluded him from at-

* On hearing the substance of the above letter from Mr. Black's lips after his return from the United States, I had the curiosity to enquire on what subject he addressed the Members of Congress. "On the important question," he replied, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—A selection quite in accordance with his constant desire, "by manifestation of the truth to COMMEND himself to every man's CONSCIENCE in the sight of God."

tending the Annual District Meeting, which was held that year at St. John, N. B. Whilst he calmly submitted to this privation, his unabated interest in the prosperity of Zion, and paternal affection towards his sons and successors in the Gospel, prompted him to address them by letter.

To the Wesleyan Missionaries in District-Meeting assembled, at the City of Saint John, N. B.

—
“HALIFAX, N. S., MAY 19, 1825.

“VERY DEAR AND RESPECTED BRETHREN,

“It is my sincere desire and prayer, that the Great Head of the Church may favour you with his divine presence on the present occasion ; and that the grace of our Lord Jesus, may be with you now and always ; that the Lord would direct all your consultations and measures to the promotion of his own glory, and the welfare of the several flocks over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. Amen.

“The state of my health forbids me the pleasure and the honour of being with you ;—of personally saluting you ;—of beholding your Christian humility, and brotherly love, and mutual condescension ; of marking your zeal and disinterested regards for the sheep of Christ which he purchased with his own blood ; and of gratefully acknowledging, and admiring the readiness with which you take your towel and water, and lave and wipe each other's feet.

“My growing infirmities forcibly remind me of how great importance it is that the loins of the inward man

be girt about with truth, and my lamp of faith trimmed, and my heart filled with holy love ; so that I may hear with joy the heavenly watch-word—'The Bridegroom cometh ! Go ye out to meet him.'

" The Report of the Branch Missionary Society for this station will be forwarded to you, I hope, before the close of your session. By the blessing of God on the systematic exertions and unwearied zeal of the Secretary and Collectors, we have paid into the hands of John Starr, Esq., Treasurer, *one hundred and seventy-four pounds*. You will be pleased to learn that the Stewards of the society have been enabled to meet the expenses of the station, so that there are no demands on the Missionary Committee. Considering our poverty, the Halifax friends cannot be justly accused of the want of generosity. Perhaps you will expect that I should say something of our spiritual state. Nothing very remarkable has taken place in this respect. The congregations are unusually large and attentive in town. The members of society, if not *uncommonly* lively, are steady, and generally speaking, I hope, walking with God ; and I may add, somewhat increased in number. *Brother Lusher* has been peculiarly anxious to afford all the assistance in his power to our friends at Margaret's Bay and Cole Harbour : nor has the divine blessing been withheld from his efforts. Considerable attention has been awakened at Margaret's Bay, and a small society formed which regularly meet in class ; they have commenced the building of a chapel. All necessary information you will obtain from brother Lusher.

" To the foregoing remarks I have only to add my most affectionate remembrances ; praying that an un-

common unction from the Holy Ghost may rest upon you all.

“ I remain, very dear and respected Brethren,
 “ Your affectionate Brother, Servant,
 “ And Fellow-labourer,
 “ In the Gospel of Christ,
 “ WILLIAM BLACK.”

In the wide circle of Christian friends whose acquaintance Mr. Black formed and cultivated by his repeated visits to the United States, none stood higher in his estimation than MR. & MRS. WILKINS of Baltimore. Equally distinguished by his intelligence, piety and sound-hearted attachment to Methodism, MR. WILKINS ranked with the KEENERS and ARMSTRONGS of that city—pillars in the church, and men who would be an ornament and an honour to any Christian body. Some time after his return to Nova Scotia, Mr. Black wrote to his estimable friend ; but by “ a singular fatality,” as Mr. W. expresses it, in a letter to Mr. Black under date of 1st July, 1824—“ while my letter to you had crossed the ocean twice before it reached its destination, yours to me had time to have twice traversed the globe before it came to hand !” The whole letter breathes such a spirit of warm and generous Christian affection, and on touching some topics which at that period greatly agitated the American Connexion, strikes the nail upon the head with such admirable precision, that the insertion of an extract from it, while it gratifies a feeling of personal respect for the memory of one who is now beyond the reach of human censure or commendation, cannot fail to excite the interest of the reader :—“ Notwithstanding our correspondence has unfortu-

nately not been marked with that activity with which it might have been, the memory of Mr. and Mrs. Black has often afforded sweet recollections to my dear partner and myself. We entertained a hope to the last, that the General Conference would, among other gratifications, give us the pleasure of your company and Mrs. Black's; nor did we abandon the hope until it could be cherished no longer. We should have been happy to have had another opportunity of manifesting our esteem for such valued friends.

“ Our Conference was an interesting one, and will long be remembered by all who were present on that occasion. The British delegates, the REV. MESSRS. REECE and HANNAH (NOW DR. HANNAH) were received with an attention that was highly gratifying to them, and their departure was felt like a calamity. Every body lamented the necessity that forced them from us. Perhaps no two persons could have been more properly chosen for such an occasion. From such a specimen of piety and talent, we entertain a high idea of our British brethren. Their presence gave an interest to the Conference which would not otherwise have been felt, and was of great importance in moderating the warmth which too often attends diversity of sentiment, especially when it assumes the spirit of party: and such a spirit unfortunately exists among the preachers at this time. A great contention about power now agitates the whole Connexion, finding its way even into private circles. The Bishops, it is feared—not felt—have too much power. That system which has been attended with such astonishing success for so long a time, under an ASBURY, a WHATCOAT, a MCKENDREE, &c., and been so signally owned by the Lord himself, is now perceived to be uncon-

stitutional and oppressive ! The opposition calculated on complete success as the reward of their electioneering, manœuvring, and pamphleteering, which was carried to a great extent. They also reckoned on the countenance of the British delegates. But they have been entirely frustrated in all their schemes.

“ Our ministers this year are brothers Merwin, Peyton and Wilson, who are well received, and I hope will be made a blessing to us. We expect likewise to have brother Summerfield with us, to preach as the delicate state of his health may permit. I suppose you have heard of his fame. He is certainly the most eloquent pulpit orator I ever listened to, having a charm in his manner that captivates his audience. He appears also to possess prudence and solidity, not common in a young man of twenty-three years, who cannot be insensible to so many flattering marks of approbation, and who never preaches without having almost as many without the doors as can find admittance within—and moreover he is an Englishman.” *

* Of this admirable and lamented young minister, whom the Great Head of the Church made a *polished shaft* in his quiver, and in whom he was peculiarly glorified, the only Memoir, we believe, that has appeared, is that written by the poet Holland. To deny to that production the praise of respectable literary execution would be unjust; yet does it not, in our estimation, present a true *mirror* of Summerfield. We freely admit the impossibility of embodying the *ideal* of genius, or of transferring to the biographic page an adequate manifestation of the power of living eloquence. We cannot, however, help thinking a much nearer approximation towards that desirable result attainable in the present instance, than has been yet accomplished. At the early age of twenty three, Summerfield's mind exhibited a harmony and an expansion which very rarely anticipate the meridian of life. The unearthly invigoration of the love of Christ affords the only

In 1827, death, which severs without distinction all sublunary ties—the most sacred and endearing as well as the most adventitious and unhallowed—deprived Mr. Black of the invaluable woman, who had been his companion in triumph and tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Christ, for nearly half a century. An obituary notice of Mrs. Black, as correct in its statements as it is graphic in delineation, appeared in the Wesleyan Magazine for 1828, from the pen of the Rev. Robert L. Lusher. Our narrative would be incomplete without its insertion.

“Died, August 11th, at Halifax, N. S., in the seventy-second year of her age, Mary, wife of the Rev. William Black. She was born in Boston, State of Massachusetts, January 7th, 1755. Her father, Mr. Martin Gay, who was for many years a deacon in a

satisfactory solution of the rapid developement of his uncommon mental energies. Though a diligent student, time had not permitted him to attain maturity of scholarship; but he possessed in a high degree all the attributes of a mind of the first order. His understanding was clear, his judgment discriminating, and his imagination so vigorous and susceptible, that it cost him no effort to fling the tints and hues of vitality over the abstractions of truth, and thereby to impart to the most common-place topics all the freshness and interest of originality. The natural effect of his thrilling eloquence was materially aided by a person and manner the most graceful, and an aspect of angelic benignity; its moral charm was the demonstration and power of that Divine Spirit

“Who touched Isaiah’s hallowed lips with fire.”

Summerfield was an *extemporaneous* preacher so far as it is proper for any young minister to be so. His sermons, indeed, were any thing but unpremeditated effusions. Having enjoyed the rare intellectual luxury of poring over his manuscripts, we are prepared to state, that his preparations for the pulpit, evince the full concentration of the powers of his mind, and the best use of all the re-

congregational church, was a prudent, moral man, extensively engaged in business; her mother was a lover of evangelical religion, and of the people of God, by whom when a child she was frequently taken to hear the celebrated Whitefield preach, in that part of North America. Upon the evacuation of Boston by the British troops, she with her parents accompanied them to Nova Scotia, and settled in that province, at a place called Fort Cumberland. It was here in the summer of 1781 that she was led to attend the ministry of Mr. Black, who afterwards became her husband; and though from a child she was of a serious turn of mind, and was favoured with gracious impressions and drawings from above, it was not until this time that she was deeply and fully convinced of her lost state. The word reached her heart; she was brought into great

sources of knowledge within his reach, on the subjects on which he expatiated. But though rich in thought, and logical in their arrangement, the *composition* is left (purposely it would appear) *unfinished*. Definitions and exegetical remarks are generally written out with studious accuracy and precision; but the occurrence on almost every page of broken hints, followed by a significant dash of the pen, indicates the orator's impatience of the trammels and tedium of previous composition, and the stirring of deep emotion within the breast that could find full vent only amid the hallowed excitements of the Sanctuary. He did not offer "to God of that which cost him nothing;" but it was the *altar* that *sanctified* his gift, and the *fire* that consumed his sacrifice issued *immediately* from the propitious heavens.

Whoever would form or exhibit a just appreciation of this incomparable youth, must like him, be decidedly *Westeyan* in his *creed* and *predilections*, in *soul* an *orator*, and in *piety* a *saint*.

"O nate, ingentem luctum ne quære tuorum;
Ostendent terris hunc tantum fata, neque ultra
Esse sinent."

distress of soul, and after seeking the pardoning mercy of God, in a diligent use of all the means of grace, her distress and condemnation were removed : she retired from the place where she had been waiting upon God, filled with peace and joy through believing. Her views becoming clearer and more enlarged as to the nature and extent of Gospel salvation, and of the privileges and enjoyments to which she was called, as a Christian, 'she reached forth unto those things which were before, and pressed towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus : ' she hungered and thirsted after a full conformity to the image and will of her adorable Lord. She walked by faith, not by sight, and intimate was the communion with God which she frequently enjoyed, while the graces of the Spirit, and the virtues of the female character shone forth in her with a pure and steady lustre. As a Christian she was diligent and exemplary in the discharge of every duty ; she was a tender and affectionate mother, and greatly endeared, by the uniform exhibition of the most amiable qualities of a friend, to an extensive circle of acquaintance. To mitigate the sufferings of the poor always afforded the richest gratification to her feeling heart, until the period when her slender frame, depressed beneath the influence of disease, could no longer follow the impulse of her beneficent disposition. For several years she filled the office of Treasurer, and was one of the most active members of the 'Halifax Female Benevolent Society.' Nor is it probable that Dorcas of Philippi made more garments for the poor than she did. 'Few persons (observes Mr. Anderson, for many years her class-leader) have had a better opportunity of forming a just estimate of our late excellent sister than I have

had, after an intimate acquaintance of many years, several of which were spent in her family. In truth, she shone with no ordinary lustre in every capacity, as a wife, a mother, a relative, a Christian, a friend. She gave valuable lessons of practical economy and industry in her family. Her venerable partner, the father of Methodism in Nova Scotia, being necessarily from home, frequently for weeks together, in the discharge of his itinerant ministerial duties, the charge of five children devolved upon her. She felt the responsibility of her situation; and conscious that it was her duty to bring up her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, she was induced to retire with them, individually, to the throne of grace, to commend them in prayer to the mercy of God, and to implore the divine blessing upon them, and upon the instructions which she gave them.' Through the progress of a gradual decline, during the last fifteen or sixteen months, she manifested the most profound submission to the divine will. In her, 'patience had its perfect work.' Fearful lest any one should think better of her than she deserved, she was always ready to acknowledge the sense she felt of her unworthiness and unprofitableness. This she was particularly led to do at the beginning of her sickness; and observed that though she felt an humble and unshaken confidence in God, as *her* God and Saviour, yet in the solemn prospect of entering into the divine presence as a disembodied spirit, she felt that she needed a holier frame of mind. For this she prayed, and in this she was heard. She was favoured with most gracious manifestations of the goodness of God; so that it was evident to all around her, that "as the outward man perished, the inner man was renewed day by day," and

that she was fast maturing for the heavenly world. She was enabled to contemplate the approach of 'the last enemy' with undisturbed serenity and unshaken fortitude. Death, divested of his terrors, appeared to her in a friendly form, ready to introduce her into the mansion of her heavenly Father. 'Christ,' said she, 'is exceedingly precious; he is glorious in all his offices; I shall soon be with him.' When she felt that the hour of her departure was at hand, she took an affectionate farewell of her husband, children, grandchildren, and friends; but when her pious and faithful black servant approached her to receive her last counsel and blessing, unable to articulate, and raising her emaciated hands to heaven in token of the joy she felt, and of the prospects of glory which seemed to be unfolding to her view, she yielded her spirit into the hands of her Redeemer. Thus did this eminently pious, heavenly-minded, and most exemplary woman finish her course with joy,

'And pass through death triumphant home.' "

Within the altar of the old Wesleyan Chapel of Halifax, around which she so often commemorated the redeeming death of her Lord and Saviour, there is placed a neat marble cenotaph in honour of her distinguished virtues, with the following appropriate inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of

MARY, WIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM BLACK,

Who, in an exemplary manner, adorned her profession as a
Member of the Methodist Society, in this place,
during forty-one years;

And departed this life, in joyful hope of a resurrection to
eternal happiness,

On the XI of August, MDCCCXXVII, aged seventy-three
years.

Her fidelity in discharging the sacred duties of the
Friend, the Wife, the Mother, and the Christian,
has rarely been excelled ;

And the recollection of her many virtues, will long be cherished
by her numerous surviving family and acquaintance.

There are two events which are so intimately associated with the family circumstances of the subject of this memoir, that they cannot with propriety be omitted, and perhaps the present offers the most appropriate opportunity for recording them. We here allude to the loss which Mr. Black sustained in the removal of two of his children to a better world—the one, Mr. Samuel Black, previous to the event just noticed: the other, his second daughter, Mary wife of Mr. J. A. Barry, a few years subsequent to the same. Although both these events, as might be expected, proved heavy afflictions to an affectionate parent, they were borne with all the resignation that became one whose motto for many years had been—"The Lord doeth all things well." Mr. Samuel Black died in the 35th year of his age, on the 15th of September, 1826. His illness was but of a few days' duration, but he left a pleasing testimony for the consolation of his sorrowing family, that he was leaving the busy scenes of life to enter upon the unfading joys of heaven. The illness of Mrs. Barry was more protracted. For more than seven years her health had been declining, but as the power of disease wasted her frame, she gave the most satisfactory evidence that her approach to the

margin of the grave was accompanied with that preparation for her change which enabled her without shrinking to look forward to the final conflict, and was cheered with those hopes of immortality which are founded on the atonement of Christ, and alone can support the mind in the hour of trial. She died January 5th, 1833, in sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life. A funeral discourse, on the occasion of her death, was delivered by the writer of this memoir, who himself had been a witness of that progressive preparation for the coming of her Lord, the most consoling indications of which were reserved to illumine the closing scene.

The death of Mrs. Black produced a chasm in her widowed husband's domestic enjoyments, great in proportion to the assemblage of excellencies with which she was adorned, and the protracted series of years during which her society had been to him a source of comfort as unmixed as it is in the power of friendship the most refined and devoted to impart. Such a bereavement could not but throw a deeper shading over the autumn of his days. His children were now all settled in life, with their families rising around them; but affectionately as he was attached to them all, and happy as he felt, as frequently as they gathered around him to testify their filial veneration and attachment, he had been so long habituated to the tranquil retreat of his own dwelling, that calmness and seclusion had become essential to his enjoyment. Under these circumstances he was induced, in the course of the year 1828, to propose marriage to Mrs. Martha, widow of Elisha Calkin, Esq., of Liverpool, a pious and amiable lady with whom he had long been acquainted. Mrs. Black's place could not perhaps have been better

supplied. Her affectionate assiduities to promote his comfort and anticipate his wishes, persevered in to the day of his death, fully justified the estimate he had formed of her virtues, and entitle her to the lasting gratitude of the family.

It only remains to notice the closing scene ; and it is pourtrayed to our hand by the Rev. Mr. Knight, who had the privilege of witnessing it.

“ ‘ Our Fathers, where are they ? and the Prophets, do they live forever ? ’ The time came when the man who had been for so many years looked up to as the Father of Methodism in this Province, must pass from the fellowship of the militant to that of the triumphant church. Indications of the rapid approaches of death were perceived by his friends for some weeks ; but they were scarcely prepared to hear of his removal when it actually took place. Conversing with him a few days before his death on the awful disease which was raging in our town, he with his usual heavenly smile said, ‘ It does not matter ; I must soon go : whether it be by cholera, or (pointing to his swollen legs) this dropsy ; it is all the same ; I leave it to my Master to choose.’ But his days were numbered. On Sunday, September 6th, 1834, he felt himself worse than usual. I saw him just before the time of evening service. His conduct toward me was, as it had been from the first hour I saw him, that of the utmost kindness and affection. Knowing that my whole time had been occupied in visiting the cholera patients at the hospital, and in their habitations, and in attending to the regular duties of the circuit, he feelingly entreated me to be careful of my health, for the sake of my family and the church. I did not, however, think that his end was so near. When called to visit him early

in the morning on which he died, Sept. 8th, I felt the force of the oft-quoted language of Dr. Young :—

“The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of heaven.”

“I found him contending with the last enemy, but in perfect possession of his reason, although so oppressed by the complicated afflictions under which he laboured in his last hour, as to find very great difficulty in speaking. ‘I trust, Sir,’ said I, ‘you now feel that Saviour to be precious whom you have so long held forth to others.’ He said ‘All is well; all is peace, no fear, no doubt; let Him do as he will; He knows what is best.’ I referred to his long and useful life. He said very impressively, ‘Leave all that; say no more. All is well.’ We joined in prayer, and his spirit was evidently very much engaged in the solemn exercise. On leaving the room I said, ‘You will soon be in the glory of which you have so often spoken in the course of your long ministry.’ ‘I shall soon be there,’ he said, ‘where Christ is gone before me.’ After which he sank very fast, and spoke little, and that with considerable difficulty. His last words were, ‘Give my farewell blessing to your family, and to the society;’ and ‘God bless you. All is well.’”

The solemn event was improved by Mr. Knight in a sermon from 2 Tim. iv : 7, 8,—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.” Although Mr. Knight’s colleague at the time, another call of duty

prevented my being present. But I was told by an intelligent friend who was there, that Mr. Knight, whose preaching was always highly acceptable, rose on that occasion quite above himself, and spoke with an unusual measure of divine unction and power. When in the close of his address he attempted to discharge the last office which his venerated friend had imposed upon him—that of giving his farewell blessing to the Society, the emotions of his heart became irrepressible, his feelings approached to an overpowering agitation; his words found their unobstructed way to the secret place of tears, the mournful sympathy was universal, every bosom heaved, and had the deep and pervading sensation of that moment found utterance, its language would probably have been that of Elisha, as he gazed upon the apotheosis of his sainted master, “My father! my father! the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” May the mantle of our ascended prophet, the Father of Methodism in Nova Scotia, with a double portion of his spirit, invest all who enter into his signally successful labours!

The monument which rises over his tomb, and the cenotaph placed as a memorial of his worth, in the chapel where he had so long held forth the word of life, exhibit the following inscription:—

Sacred to the Memory of

THE REVEREND WILLIAM BLACK,

Whose labours in the Gospel Ministry,
for half a century, have been acknowledged,
with distinguished approbation,
by the Great Head of the Church.

For many years
 he was the General Superintendent of the
 Wesleyan Missions,
 in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick,
 where he is justly deemed the Father of
 Methodism.

To his labours, prudence, and paternal care,
 is the Church in this place much indebted
 for its rise, increase, and prosperity :
 With its history will his name be
 associated ; and his memory revered
 during its continuance.

He entered into rest VIII September, MDCCCXXXIV,
 aged LXXIV years.

THE details exhibited in the preceding Memoir so fully illustrate Mr. Black's character in all its aspects, that an elaborate delineation of it will neither be necessary nor expected. I cannot, however, deny myself or my readers the pleasure of presenting them with the following just though rapid sketch, by my estimable friend, the Rev. Robert L. Lusher, to which his obliging compliance with my request enables me to give publicity. In a letter to me, dated Montreal, October 23, 1838, he writes :—

“ Although I feel incompetent to do full justice to the character of the late Rev. W. Black, in any attempt at its delineation, yet, having been associated with him in the work of the ministry—having seen and conversed with him nearly every day for two years, and having had the opportunity of hearing him preach once almost every Sunday, during that time, when his health would permit, I am prepared at once to say,

that as a Christian, a Minister, and a friend, Mr. Black was no common man. He was emphatically and scripturally, in my estimation, a good man, and a great man. He enjoyed the esteem and veneration of persons of all denominations, an honour to which his virtues and talents entitled him. Amiable and condescending in his spirit, yet consistent and decided in his character, and serious and dignified in his deportment, he won the affection and commanded the respect of the poor and the rich, who alike regarded him as the 'minister of God to them for good.'—His affectionate and soothing exhortations to the one, and his judicious counsels and faithful warnings, when necessary, to the other, were in general as acceptable as they were salutary and seasonable. I also consider Mr. Black to have been a sound divine, and an original preacher. His ministry was neither declamatory nor oratorical; but being convincing and persuasive, and generally attended with a gracious influence from above, it was at once popular and useful. The benignity of the divine character rather than the 'terrors of the Lord'—the pleasures and rewards of piety rather than the eternal consequences of sin, were the topics on which he seemed most to delight to dwell. It is believed that he was one of the most successful ministers of modern times, and that hundreds of souls in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and on the adjacent continent, as the fruits of his ministry, will be 'the crown of his rejoicing in the presence of the Lord Jesus at his coming.' Wherever he was, in the parlour or in the pulpit, he seemed to regard it as the business of his life to save souls.

"Many of the societies in the Nova Scotia District were of his planting, and for many years he watched

over them all with the most paternal and anxious solicitude, rejoicing in their prosperity, or mourning over any declension of which he might hear: and when through increasing infirmities he could no longer visit them or preach to them, he did not cease to offer up in their behalf his fervent supplications to Almighty God, that the gates of hell might never prevail against them!

“The memory of Mr. Black is dear to me, and to my family. His pious counsels, his holy example, and the paternal and affectionate interest which he took in every thing that concerned my credit and usefulness, can never be forgotten by me. Equally dear to us is the memory of his precious wife, who was ‘an Israelite indeed,’ and who peacefully finished her earthly course, entering into the joy of her Lord. ‘The memory of the just is blessed.’

“And now, dear Sir, should you have an unoccupied niche in the monument you are raising to the memory of our venerable friend, this imperfect sketch of his character is submitted to you, to dispose of as you may think proper. Should you judge it worthy of a place in your memoir, I shall consider its insertion as an honour.”

To this portrait by Mr. Lusher, which I am persuaded none will deem too highly coloured who were acquainted with the original, I merely add a few concluding remarks on two features of Mr. Black’s ministerial character that were equally prominent and exemplary.

He was remarkably judicious and *lenient* in the enforcement of the corrective discipline of the church. Never, we believe we may confidently assert, during

the long course of his ministry, did he exercise his authority as a "Lord over God's heritage," or wield the sword of discipline with undue severity or indiscretion. He was zealous for the Lord of hosts, and for the purity of his church; but his zeal was at an equal distance from a timid and temporizing policy on the one hand, and from enthusiasm and temerity on the other. It was always according to knowledge—a knowledge of himself, and of the philosophy of the moral feelings. He deemed it no less essential to a minister under the Gospel, than it was to the high priest under the Law, that he should have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way, inasmuch as he himself is compassed with moral infirmity. And he knew that the expulsion of a delinquent professor from all spiritual association with the people of God, unless imperatively demanded by the nature of the case, would be much more likely to increase his obduration, and to preclude the hope of his perfect restoration, than a course of faithful admonition and commiserating forbearance. This, we believe, was one of the first lessons which he was in the habit of affectionately impressing upon the minds of those youthful ministers who were so happy as to receive his godly and paternal counsels.

Our departed Father in Christ was eminently a man of prayer. The preceding pages bear ample testimony to the vigilance and earnestness with which he cultivated a devotional spirit in connection with his public ministrations. It was a common saying of Luther, *Bene orasse est bene studuisse*; he never found himself in so happy a frame for the investigation of divine things, as when his thoughts and affections were purified and elevated by prayer. Equally aware was Mr.

Black of the necessity of beginning, continuing, and ending his labours in a prayerful spirit. The result was a holy and beseeching fervour in his preaching, and an internal anointing of the Spirit which shed its efficient influence over the congregation. A learned infidel once remarked of the ministry of the Methodist church, that were they only panoplied in literary armour they would in five years make a conquest of the world. But the divine charm in virtue of which such moral transformations are wrought, is hid from the wise and prudent. They know not that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of man—that unaccompanied with that quickening and plastic energy, the most imposing array of human accomplishments were as useless as Saul's armour on the son of Jesse, and eloquence majestic and harmonious as the music of the spheres but "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal;" they know not that "prayer moves the hand that moves the world." Such, however, is the fact. By a law of the moral universe, as well as by the promised blessing of Him who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, that minister who cultivates the most intimate intercourse with God, will have the freest access to the springs of moral action within the breasts of his hearers, and the greatest cause to rejoice in the day of Christ that he has not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Among these the subject of the preceding memoir will be adorned with distinguished honours. He honoured God, and was honoured by Him. Though an example to all in his systematic efforts to enlarge the resources of his knowledge to the last, and accustomed thoroughly to digest the materials of his discourses, he deemed it not less essential to his success, to carry with him into the sacred desk, as often

as he ascended it, a fresh unction from the Holy One, than a connected train of edifying thought. And many were the seals of his apostleship. Besides the incalculably beneficial effect of his zealous labours and holy example in edifying the people of God, not less, probably, than *five hundred* instances might even now be traced in which truth from his lips was clothed with salvation to those who heard it. The day draweth nigh when he will be rewarded yet more openly. Few, it is believed, even among the most faithful and successful ministers of the Lord Jesus, will receive from Him a crown studded with more or brighter gems, when "they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER."

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 3, last line but one, for *where* read *when*.

" 5, last line } for *received*, read *regarded*.

" 6, first "

" 120, fourth line from bottom, for *without* read *with*.

" 248, twelfth line top for *distinctly* read *distinctively*.

" 248, fourteenth line " for *pures* read *parae*.



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